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Religion and Resistance: African Baptist Churches in Virginia

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RELIGION AND RESISTANCE: AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES IN
VIRGINIA

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Anthropology
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

Stephanie Reiss

1997

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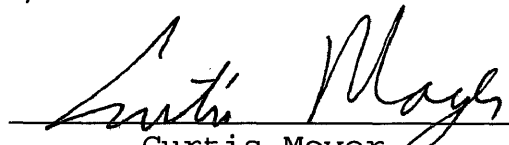
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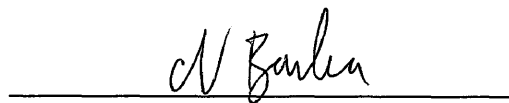
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Grey Gundaker

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this analysis is to examine the ways in which church architecture and location reflect the changes in Virginia Baptists' policy toward African Baptists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Symbolic theory was used to compare and contrast contemporary White and African Baptist architecture and spatial distribution.

Research indicated that changes in White Baptist attitudes after 1820 correlated with greater differentiation between White and Black material culture and location. African Baptist Churches moved from the countryside and began proliferating in cities, where they were primarily kept to the peripheral areas away from the White Baptists.

While African Baptist church architectural styles remained relatively consistent from inception until Emancipation, White churches relied increasingly on formal styles in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. After Emancipation, African Baptist Churches adopted similar styles to their White counterparts.

RELIGION AND RESISTANCE: AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES IN
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PROLOGUE

The African Baptist church in Virginia during the ante-bellum period was a fascinating institution because it was, in a few instances, allowed to function completely without White oversight. This is the last thing one would expect in a region already struggling with its enslaved population, and one in which any private gathering of slaves and free Blacks could be an opportunity for conspiracy and revolt.

This study proposes, first, that White slave-holders in Virginia had a vested interest in ensuring that African Baptist material culture, specifically church buildings, reflected the inferior status of African-Americans. Thus, as the demographics of Baptists in Virginia changed toward the middle of the nineteenth century, incorporating a higher proportion of wealthy slave-holders, one would expect differences between Anglo and African Baptist churches to become more pronounced. Additionally, African-American congregations may have responded to attempts at repression by manipulating their material culture in ways that re-

negotiated their position in society. Finally, one would expect the appearance of the average African Baptist church in the early post-bellum period to be very different from its predecessors as a result of Emancipation.

In order to test these hypotheses, a symbolic/contextual approach will be applied to data acquired from written accounts, archaeological excavations, drawings, maps and photographs, which will provide information on church appearance and locations. The methodology of symbolic theory, as devised by Ian Hodder, requires "a blend of inductive and deductive reasoning, a concern with the context of our own ideas as archaeologists in the contemporary West, the controlled use of analogy (through ethnohistorical information), and the vision of data as 'text' written in a simple universal language made up of similarities and difference" (Hodder 1987:6).

The first step in a symbolic analysis is to "[i]dentify a network of patterned similarities and differences in temporal, spatial, depositional and typological dimensions" (Hodder 1987:6). Thus, the appearance and locations of African Baptist churches in Virginia will be compared and contrasted with that of contemporary White Baptist churches,

as well as their post-bellum successors.

Symbolic theory also recognizes that individuals actively "manipulate material culture as a resource and as a sign system in order to create and transform relations of power and domination" (Hodder 1993:9). Architectural styles will therefore be understood as a result of the compromise between information exchange and functionality. While there are different levels of stylistic attributes, the focus here will be on the most visible ones such as overall size, and exterior architectural form, rather than small decorative details or interior layout. According to Wobst, these attributes with higher visibility are more likely to convey messages to the broader society, including the White elite, while less visible details convey within group messages which may have only been intended for other African Baptists (Wobst 1977).

By using symbolic theory to analyze African Baptist material culture, this study will add a new facet to the literature on ante-bellum African-American religious life in the South. Prior to 1960, resources on African-American religion were scarce and tended to focus on history or sociology, such as W.E.B. DuBois' The Negro Church (1903),

Carter G. Woodson's The History of the Negro Church (1921), Benjamin May's and Joseph W. Nicholson's The Negro Church (1933) and Luther Jackson's "Religious Development of the Negro in Virginia from 1760-1860" in the Journal of Negro History, (1931).

Authors began exploring African-American religious life in greater numbers after 1960, but most focused primarily on the "secretive" slave religions which left little trace in the material record. Important works included Edward F. Frazier's The Negro Church in America (1964), Eugene D. Genovese's Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made (1974), Lawrence W. Levine's Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom (1977), Albert J. Raboteau's Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Ante-bellum South (1978), John B. Boles' Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord, Race and Religion in the American South 1740-1870 (1988) and W. Harrison Daniel's "Virginia Baptists and the Negro in the Ante-bellum Era" in the Journal of Negro History (1971).

One work which focuses on the *visible* slave church and was the inspiration for portions of the subsequent analysis is Mechal Sobel's Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an

Afro-Baptist Faith (1979). This book clearly delineated the changes in Baptist attitudes toward African Baptists in the South during the ante-bellum period, but does not focus on church buildings as meaningful material culture.

Perhaps the author who most closely approached the African Baptist church from a material culture perspective was Edward D. Smith, who wrote Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Rise of Black Churches in Eastern American Cities 1740-1877. The book used an exhibit at the Anacostia Museum as a basis for a comprehensive history of the African Baptist and Methodist churches in the South. However, church buildings, furniture and other material culture were used as illustrative material rather than a potential database for analysis.

This is not to say church material culture in Virginia has never been analyzed. Davis and Rawlings did a thorough study of ante-bellum church architecture in their work Virginia's Ante-bellum Churches (1978), but they did not attempt to separate Black material culture from White or distinguish between different denominations. Thus, although they reached some conclusions about patterns in Virginia's ante-bellum church architecture, they did not attempt to

derive meaning from different stylistic choices.

The following work has drawn from all the aforementioned literature, but attempts to go beyond sociology and history to uncover the role that the physical church buildings played in African Baptist struggles for autonomy.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS, IDEOLOGICAL CONTROL IN VIRGINIA

Religion has often been intertwined with issues of political control and acceptance of the status quo, as Marx recognized in his famous quote: "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people" (Andrews 1989). This was certainly true in colonial and ante-bellum Virginia. Historic documents indicate that the Anglican, and later the Episcopal, church employed both religious ideology and material culture to support inequities in the class system. Religious doctrine was used to convince slaves that their enslavement was appropriate to their pagan status and to their race.

From the very beginning of the slave trade, slave owners recognized that religion could be used to justify bondage. Thus, most slave-holders in the seventeenth century would not allow their Black slaves to convert to Christianity, because the slaves' "heathen" status was

offered as the primary reason for their enslavement (Boles 1988:2).

Gradually, though, this concept began to change, and beginning in the late seventeenth century, Christianity was used as a means of indoctrination rather than a convenient rationale for African servitude. In 1662, Virginia enacted codes declaring that all children born in the colonies would be held bond or free only according to the mother's civil status, and not her religion (Murphy et. al. 1993:194). Along with this radical shift in policy, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, which was an Anglican missionary organization based in London, in 1701 began to argue that Christianity would make better, more obedient and productive slaves. Because this idea took hold very slowly, by 1724 the Virginia legislature even proposed that a tax incentive be offered to masters who converted their slaves to Christianity (Raboteau 1978:107).

Anglican preachers in the eighteenth century, therefore, began holding special services for slaves, in which they manipulated Christian doctrine to reflect the values and needs of the Virginian slave holding system. This tradition was continued by the Episcopal Church in the early

nineteenth century as well. Peter Randolph, a slave in Virginia, recalled a sermon as follows: "Servants, obey your masters. Do not steal or lie for this is very wrong. Such conduct is sinning against the Holy Ghost and is base ingratitude to your kind masters who feed cloth and protect you" (Webber 1978:51).

The extent of ideological indoctrination was even more explicit in a sermon given by Reverend Mead, the Episcopal Bishop of Virginia, in the early nineteenth century:

Take care that you do not fret, or murmur or grumble at your condition, for this will not only make your life uneasy, but it will greatly offend Almighty God. Consider that it is not the people that you belong to, it is not the men that have brought you to it, but it is the will of God who hath by his wise providence made you servants, because, no doubt, he knew that the condition would be best for you in this world and help you better toward heaven, if you do your duty in it, so that any discontent at your not being free, or rich, or great as some others is quarreling with your heavenly master and finding fault with God himself [Watson 1848:28-31].

Such Anglican and Episcopal churches' indoctrination imposed a Black ethnic identity on slaves which could be used to deny rights and privileges. This identity was very different from a potentially self-ascribed ethnicity, as slaves were taken from many different regions in Africa and did not necessarily see themselves as belonging to a single

ethnic group. Moreover, since ethnicity can vary according to the objectives of the "others" in a given social situation (Depres 1975), the African-American identity imposed by Anglican and Episcopal churches was probably more rigid than that constructed by less affluent White Baptists in the mid-eighteenth century, who did not have much invested in the class and slave holding system.

When the Separate Baptist church first entered Northwestern Virginia in 1743, it was an anomaly because it was potentially subversive to the White elite establishment rather than supportive of it. The early Virginia Baptists spoke out against the evils of slavery, passing the following resolution in 1789:

..slavery is a violent depredation of the rights of nature and inconsistent with a republican government and therefore, recommended to our brethren to make use of their local missions to extirpate this horrid evil from the land [Woodson 1921:32].

As mentioned previously, the Separate Baptist church was able to take such a radical position in the late eighteenth century because its members were mostly disinherited from slave-holding and planter traditions. Semple explains, "When the Baptists first appeared in North Carolina and Virginia they were viewed by men in power as

beneath their notice.." (1894:29). Semple contrasted the Anglican clergy with the Baptists, asserting that while the Anglican clergy were well educated and powerful, "[t]he Baptist preachers were without learning, without patronage, generally very poor, very plain in their dress, unrefined in their manners and awkward in their address.." (Semple 1864:44).

Because of their lowly roots, the eighteenth century Baptist church allowed slaves to participate almost as equals. All people whether bondsmen or free were asked to call each other "brother" and "sister" (James 1988:39; Boles 1988:12). Slaves and free Blacks could also become licensed preachers, and even occasionally preached to mixed or all-White congregations, as occurred in Portsmouth between 1792 and 1802 when a Black man, Jacob Bishop, became pastor of the Court Street Baptist Church. The range of possibilities open to African-Americans in the church had some revealing results: runaway slaves in Virginia tended to use the guise that they were freemen Baptist preachers (Virginia Gazette 9/8/1775).

African-Americans were also drawn to the Baptist church because it emphasized emotion rather than reserved prayer,

thereby allowing them to incorporate more familiar elements of West African tradition. One example of a religious custom adopted in a Baptist context was the "shout" in which a group of African Baptists would shuffle in a circle to the tune of a spiritual.

But the most significant difference between the Baptist and other churches was that slaves were allowed to form their own congregations completely divorced from White control. Although the Methodist church was equally vigilant in its outreach to African-Americans, it had a definitive hierarchy which prevented the localized autonomy available in the Baptist church. Since theologically each Baptist Church represented the independent "body of Christ," there was no need for any means of centralized supervision. The only semblance of oversight came from regional associations, each being a "council or assembly, composed of delegates or representatives from each church within the bounds designated for that purpose, the object of which is to take into consideration the welfare of the churches and assist them by their counsel in the preservation of order and discipline among themselves" (Semple 1894:62). Associations might offer advice but they could not compel a church to

take a particular action, and since membership was completely voluntary, churches were always free to leave (Semple 1894:62). African Baptist churches in the ante-bellum period were admitted as members to such regional associations as Dover, Portsmouth, Kettocton, Goshen, and Columbia.

The majority of the White elite were upset by the large degree of autonomy that slaves could enjoy within the Baptist Church and desired to mitigate it. Scholar Mechal Sobel puts it succinctly: "in the slave period Whites feared the revolutionary equality preached by Baptists., as well as the opportunity for fellowship and conspiracy afforded by religious meetings" (Sobel 1979:158). Furthermore, in Virginia Blacks made up half of the total population by 1770 (Glassie 1975:188), so a slave rebellion was not an implausible occurrence. The White fear of slave revolt was clearly reflected in travelers' accounts of the day:

Margret Hunter Hall, a visitor from England in 1828, was displeased to find soldiers on perpetual parade in Richmond. Upon inquiry she found that the reason for having them is in case of an insurrection amongst slaves of which the Southern people live in constant dread. What a miserable existence it must be! [Hall 1931:197].

In the mid- to late-eighteenth century, White

Baptists did not share these fears with the slave-holding elite. The few separate African Baptist churches that existed in the eighteenth century, such as Bluestone and Williamsburg, were likely given freer rein in material culture expression.

But despite the Baptist commitment to racial equality in the eighteenth century, after 1790 the Virginia Baptist General Committee slowly began to retreat from its overt abolitionist stance. Just four years after its original pronouncement, in 1793, the church reversed their policy toward abolition saying that each Baptist could decide his own position on slavery. When the Dover Association asked the Baptist General Committee, a voluntary association of Virginia Churches, in 1797 whether it might not be a good idea to form a plan for the gradual emancipation of slaves, the General Committee responded that it was now an issue that should be taken up by political groups outside the religious sphere. In keeping with this waning enthusiasm for equality among all men, in 1805 slave members in most areas had to get written permission from their masters to join the Baptist church.

By the nineteenth century, a significant change took

place in the composition of Baptist congregations that altered White Baptist attitudes toward their African-American brethren. As Sobel has demonstrated, in the period from 1822-1844 White Baptist class status rose, as did slave membership, and as a result the Whites were less willing to share church life (Sobel 1979:187). Increasingly, wealthy and powerful families began to convert to the Baptist denomination creating a power struggle between slave and slave-holder within the Baptist church.

As the century progressed the church became less and less sympathetic toward the abolitionist viewpoint, as reflected in their attitude toward African Baptists. In 1828 the Portsmouth Association ruled that Gillfield African Baptist Church in Petersburg must be represented by a White delegate and recommended the following:

Whereas the constitution of independent and colored churches in this state and their representation in this body involves a point of great delicacy which may probably lead to most unpleasant results: Resolved therefore that this association advise the colored church at Gillfield to return to the Market Street [White] Church and in the future represent themselves in this association through that body [Jones 1881:226]

The church refused to reunite with the White Market Street Church, but conceded by sending White delegates until 1838, when the church decided it wanted to send its own

members as delegates. This was granted, but the Black pastor (Sampson White) who preached from 1837-1838 was removed and a White pastor (Gordon) assigned (Johnson 1903:9).

Additionally, Baptists took actions which indicated their increased support of slavery and fear of slave uprising, such as removing slaves from the independent Elam Church in Charles City County and forcing them to attend the racially-mixed Old Mount Zion Church where they could be supervised. The White elite also encouraged free Blacks in areas such as Richmond to recolonize Africa as missionaries, with the hope that removal of free Blacks would quiet potential unrest.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the leaders of the Baptist church had even begun to speak out in support of slavery. Eli Ball, a Virginia Baptist clergyman, said in 1835 that slaves "were well cared for and didn't want freedom" (Daniel 1971:7). Also, Thornton Stringfellow, a Baptist in Culpeper County, published a defense of slavery in 1841 (Daniel 1971:11).

It seems likely that this change in the attitude of the Baptist church from opposition to defense of slavery will be reflected in a parallel disparity between White and Black

material culture and church locations in the nineteenth century. The following analysis investigates this disparity by tracing the evolution of 13 African Baptist Churches that were constituted during the ante-bellum period and the White ante-bellum churches which arose alongside them. Although there were additional ante-bellum African Baptist Churches, such as "Uncle Jack's Black Baptist Church" in Nottaway County, "Fincastle African Church" in Fincastle County, "Chickahominy African Church" in James City County and the "Negro Baptist Church" in King and Queen County, no record of a permanent meetinghouse exists for these congregations (and it is quite plausible that no structures were ever built), so they were excluded from this analysis.

CHAPTER II

AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH LOCATION IN VIRGINIA

The distribution of the Black population throughout Virginia was the first determining factor in the emergence of African Baptist Churches. It is not surprising that almost all of the ante-bellum African Baptist Churches arose in the Tidewater region, because in areas to the West of the Piedmont, slaves made up less than 10% of the population (Sobel 1987:4). In contrast, many of the counties in the Tidewater had a slave population comprising between 50-75% of the total (Sobel 1987:4).

But population density alone did not determine the location of African Baptist churches. Changes in White Baptist attitudes toward African Baptists encouraged the evolution of the church as an urban, rather than rural, institution. Although African Baptist meetinghouses were rare in the eighteenth century, when they did exist they tended to be out in the countryside, unsupervised and away from White congregations. The Bluestone church met on

William Byrd III's plantation in Lunenburg County in 1776, the Williamsburg African Baptist Church met on William Ludwell Lee's plantation in 1791, and the Elam Baptist Church met in rural Charles City County in 1810. These meeting places offered the greatest autonomy for African Baptist churches, as meetings could be held in secret without the knowledge of the White elite. Also, the meeting places at Bluestone and Williamsburg in the woods or brush arbor were more consistent with traditional West African forms of worship, which took place in the open.

But in the early nineteenth century the African Baptist church became an urban institution, a transition which may have been hastened by White elite manipulation. Although a significant proportion of the Black population was still concentrated on plantations, by the nineteenth century Black churches were located almost exclusively in cities, though occasionally drawing from provincial areas. A plantation owner in the nineteenth century might bring in an individual to preach to his slaves, or allow them to join him at his home church, but rarely were slaves allowed to conduct their own services, much less construct a separate building for worship. Instead, it was White Baptists who

traveled into the countryside for services (Jackson 1931:188). Black churches in Virginia were primarily located in such cities as Alexandria, Fredericksburg, Lynchburg, Manchester, Norfolk, Petersburg, Richmond and Williamsburg.

By the nineteenth century, African Baptist churches were urban institutions, but how did they emerge within specific areas of the city? Several models might predict the location of the African Baptist church in an urban setting. Sjoberg's model of the preindustrial city (1960), presupposes the existence of a core area where wealth and resources are concentrated, and a periphery where the poor reside. Cressy, Shephard & Magid (1982) have built upon this model, suggesting that the core was generally the governmental and business center, and that those in the semi-periphery and periphery were economically isolated, lacking access to wealth and resources in proportion to their spatial marginalization.

According to this model, one would expect African Baptist churches to be built in the periphery in conjunction with Black residential neighborhoods. Implicit in this conclusion is the understanding that African Baptist churches were constructed to fill a demand that arose within

a pre-existing Black neighborhood. This neighborhood would then continue to expand as proximity to the church became a factor in later decisions about residential location.

Burgess proposed a contrasting model for the post-industrial city, whereby increasing congestion prompted the wealthy to abandon the core area for residence in the periphery (1925). According to this model, the African Baptist churches should be located in the core area along with low socio-economic residential neighborhoods. Both of these models propose that African-American churches would appear within the congregants' residential area where they would be less closely monitored by the elite. Whether in the core or periphery, the White elite may have approved of spatial separation as way to convey African Baptists' inferiority.

A third model is needed to take into account the desire of the elite to further their own agenda by manipulating the location of African Baptist churches. This model proposes that the low socio-economic status of free Blacks and non-domestic slaves forced them to live in one location, but that their church might be located some distance away in the area with high concentrations of wealth. Instead of

churches being built in proximity to their congregants, this model suggests that the elite may have actively influenced church location for further ease of supervision. This option would not disprove either of the core-peripheral residence hypotheses, but rather would not assume *a priori* the spatial relationship between a religious institution and the residential community it serves.

Together these models suggest two basic strategies through which urban Whites could attempt to limit the importance of Black churches during the ante-bellum period, both as emerging institutions within the city as a whole, and as possible threats to White supremacy. The efficacy of these strategies is questionable, though, because the meanings assigned to certain locations may have been different for the White elite and Black communities.

The first strategy supports the building of African-American churches in marginal areas, away from the city's center of power. Although the elite perceived this as undesirable, Blacks may have disagreed since it allowed for greater solidarity within their community, and potentially reduced white interference. In fact, it is possible that African Baptists actively sought the very locations that the

White elite thought they were imposing on the congregants.

The second elite strategy placed African-American churches close to or within predominantly White areas of the city, thus promoting White oversight. This strategy, too, may have had different meaning from the Black perspective, as the location reflected the societal prestige usually denied to them. This study reveals both elite strategies at work. However, variations from city to city also stem from significant difference in how these urban areas developed.

One factor which might call these models into question is the assertion that urban neighborhoods during the ante-bellum period were very heterogenous, with Blacks and Whites of different socio-economic levels living side-by-side (Groves and Muller 1975). The ghettoization of urban neighborhoods was prevented partially by low status domestic slaves residing with their masters in the elite area. However, although ante-bellum neighborhoods were more diverse than those in the post-bellum era, there is some evidence of the gradual emergence of homogenous Black residential clusters by the early nineteenth century (Blomberg 1988:68), and it is within these clusters that hypotheses about the Black church in the core or periphery

can be tested.

To test the utility of these models, ante-bellum racial and socio-economic population distributions were examined in five cities. In three, Alexandria, Fredericksburg, and Norfolk, the location of African-American residential areas followed the predictions of Sjoberg's model, and were linked to the location of the African Baptist churches. In Alexandria, Black residential areas begin to emerge in four main peripheral areas during the ante-bellum period (Blomberg 1988:71). The Alfred Street church was located in "The Bottoms," the earliest Black neighborhood of the four. "The Bottoms" occupied the southwestern quadrant of Alexandria, bounded by King Street on the North and Pitt Street on the east (See Figure 1). This quadrant of the city housed the densest and most stable free Black population in Alexandria during the ante-bellum period (Blomberg 1988). The location of the church within the heart of the Black residential community may indicate that the White elite did not feel sufficiently threatened by the Black church to warrant direct oversight, or that the spatial separation from the White residential areas was sufficient to denote low status. The church remained in the

predominantly Black area from its inception in 1818 to the present.

The same can be said of the Bank Street Church in Norfolk, which split from its parent, the Bute Street Church, in 1840 as the result of a theological dispute. Bank Street Church was located on the border of one of the peripheral Black neighborhoods, which formed a corridor between Catherine and Church Streets.¹ The neighborhood was primarily composed of free Blacks, but a segment of the slave population also lived here away from their masters (Bogger 1994:125) (See Figure 2). The location was not particularly desirable, as the area was filled with "crowded tenements" of Blacks and some poor Whites (Bogger 1976:125).

The Fredericksburg African Baptist Church and the Bute Street Church in Norfolk also conformed to Sjoberg's model of low status occupation of the periphery. However, here the churches arose during a transitional period when the separation of a core from a periphery first began to emerge. In Fredericksburg the racially mixed church was in the desirable part of town until 1849, at which point the area

¹The other primarily Black neighborhood could be found along the docks of Water Street. (Bogger 1994:125)

became less coveted and the Whites left.

The history of Fredericksburg African Baptist Church states that in 1818:

..the church was located in one of the choice parts of town at that time, near a ferry landing, perhaps the busiest of 4 or 5 which crossed the Rappahannock from Fredericksburg to Stafford, and the corner of the two busiest streets, Hanover and Sophia. The cost of the lot is indicative of the value of property in this section [Darter 1960:29-30].

But as Fredericksburg gradually expanded away from the waterfront, the desirability of Sophia Street declined. The main thoroughfares became Caroline and Princess Anne Streets, where a new all-White Baptist church was built (See Figure 3).

Similarly, Norfolk's Bute Street church originated with a racially mixed congregation in a building on Church Street, which was not at the time a low status residential area (See Figure 2). In 1818, when the area between Church and Catherine Streets began to emerge as part of the peripheral Black residential area, the Whites left the church. Then, in 1830, the Blacks moved to Bute Street, only a block from the future location of the Bank Street Church. The church's new location reflected the northward movement of the Black residential area along the Church and Catherine

Street corridor in the late nineteenth century.²

In other cities, Sjoberg's model of elites living within the periphery accurately predicted residential areas but did not correlate with church location. This may be the result of White elite attempts to disempower Black congregations through strict supervision rather than spatial separation, but could also result from donation of White church buildings to Black congregations, the splitting off of whites to newer churches, and the sale of buildings previously occupied by whites to Black congregations, as well as a host of other factors. Regardless of cause, the result was spatial separation of Black members' residences and their churches.

Elite Whites in some cities wanted Black churches in upper class areas during the ante-bellum period, in order that they be properly monitored, but wanted the Blacks to leave after Emancipation. For example, when the Black Baptists split off from the Lynchburg parent church in 1858, there was no resistance to their decision to remain on the same street in a different building (See Figure 4). However,

²By the twentieth century, the heart of Norfolk's Black community had moved even farther to the northern periphery, north of Brambleton Street (Lewis 1991:41).

as Court Street remained an enclave for the elite after Emancipation, the enthusiasm for the Black Baptist church in the area markedly dissipated. A historical sketch published by the church in 1960 described the following:

At that time Court Street was where the homes of the prominent and rich White residents lived, and during the days of slavery they wanted to keep the Negro slaves near them in their worship services in order to observe their loyalty. However, when Freedom came, they had no further interest in them and they wanted to force the Negroes to move their worship place from the prominent Court Street residential section of the city. But, since Negroes had worshiped on that street since it was the center of the town, the colored congregation was just as determined to remain on Court Street with the Church [Folder 118-156, VDHR]

When the African Baptist congregation planned to construct a new church near the old location, rich White locals began to take it upon themselves to drive the Black church out of the area by offering the owner of the desired lot a higher price than the African Baptists had offered.

This attempt failed, however, for the trustees had placed a deposit of \$100 on the lot and had entered into a binding agreement to pay the balance..Pressure was then put on the city's banks and loan associations to refuse the loan, but this was thwarted.. It continued to be regarded as a fashionable address and a number of large mansions, as well as churches for White congregations, were soon built nearby [Folder 118-56].

In Richmond, none of the models of residence adequately accounts for the diversity of African Baptist Church

locales. Sjoberg's model was once again accurate in anticipating the location of Richmond's poor residential population, but not in predicting the location of the African Baptist churches. Instead, the best predictor of church location, whether on the core or the periphery, was the order in which the churches split from their parent congregations, moving increasingly toward the periphery as time passed (See Figure 5).

The First African Baptist Church, as the name implies, was the first Black congregation to separate from its parent, and the only church to occupy a site in the core area of Richmond during the ante-bellum period. It was situated on the corner of 14th (College) and H (Broad) Streets in a prominent, White neighborhood near the capitol. This unusually desirable location resulted because the Black congregation inherited the church building when the White congregants left. This neighborhood was known as "Court End"; it was the center of town and had the handsomest residences and churches as well as practically all the stores, hotels and public buildings in the nineteenth century. In fact, the new White Baptist church was constructed just a block away from the earlier church on

12th and H (Broad).

In contrast, the Second African Baptist Church remained in a more peripheral, poor, and primarily Black neighborhood, (known as "Penitentiary Bottom" due to its proximity to the penitentiary), from its inception in 1846 until the mid-twentieth century (Scott 1950:203). This church was located on Byrd Street, west of the core area, while its parent Second Baptist Church continued to occupy a building it had constructed in the core area in 1840, on Main and 6th Street.

The Third African Baptist Church (also known as Ebenezer Baptist Church) was constructed in 1858 on the northwest corner of Judah and West Leigh Street even farther from the core. It was located in the Jackson Ward neighborhood, known as "little Africa" before the Civil War. Again, the neighborhood of the offspring church was a very stark contrast to that of its parent: Grace Street Church, on the corner of Second and Marshall Street in "Church Hill." Mary Wingfield Scott described the Grace Street area as "substantial but not wealthy" (1950:44). The White Leigh Street Baptist Church was also located in this area.

Williamsburg differed from all these cities in that it

was too small, and the residential population was too heterogenous to support a core/peripheral analysis. Nevertheless, the African Baptist Church, first built in 1818, differed from the contemporary White churches in Williamsburg by being located in a less desirable and less prestigious area. This can be attributed to the intentional integration of formal, monumental spaces into the town plan. Two consecutive meeting places of the White Zion Baptist Church, the powder magazine and a structure built in 1855, were in the center of town, facing the main thoroughfare, Duke of Gloucester Street. This was also true of the Anglican Bruton Parish Church, which had been built before Williamsburg was laid out and served as a central "fixed point" in the town design (Reps 1972:143). Since the Anglican church was a fundamental part of Anglo-American colonial life, the planners of Williamsburg undoubtedly intended the central area facing Duke of Gloucester Street to be one of the most important locations in the town, and the place for the elite to be seen. The African Baptist Church, in contrast, was on a smaller side street paralleling Duke of Gloucester Street, reflecting the lower status of its congregation (See Figure 6).

CHAPTER III

BAPTIST CHURCH APPEARANCE BEFORE EMANCIPATION

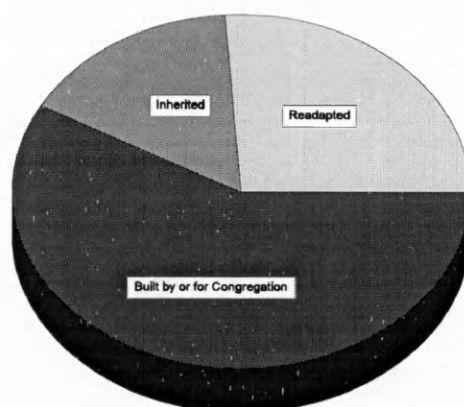
Thus far, we have seen that African-American Baptist churches usually were built in peripheral locations, a pattern that becomes increasingly more pronounced as the cities expanded and tensions mounted toward the Civil War. The physical appearance of African Baptist churches offers another material culture clue to interracial conflicts. The buildings themselves bear witness to some of the constraints upon their congregants.

However, although the comparison of contemporary White and Black Baptist church buildings may be informative, several theoretical and practical difficulties should be pointed out initially. First, opportunities for interpreting African Baptist Church material culture during the ante-bellum period are severely constrained by the scarcity of evidence, as well as by the congregations' limited opportunities for church construction. Only a little over half of the ante-bellum Black churches discussed in this

study were built by or specifically for the Black congregations inhabiting them, and minor alterations to pre-existing or inherited buildings are more difficult to detect. Some information detailing church appearance was available for 21 of the 24 documented ante-bellum African Baptist church buildings (comprising 13 congregations) in Virginia. Of these, 3 were buildings previously inhabited by a mixed congregation, and inherited by the Blacks when the White congregations left, 5 were other standing structures (a theater, a tobacco factory, a carriage house, a Presbyterian church, a Methodist church), and 13 were built by or for the African Baptist congregations (See Tables 1, 2, 3).

Separate ante-bellum African Baptist churches were not only rare, but architectural information about them is scant and may also be unreliable. The majority of the earliest churches were described by only a few sentences of text. Additionally, some illustrations, such as the "Old Salt Box" in Norfolk, were undated and unsigned and may either be contemporary sketches or later interpretations (See Figure 7). Even those illustrations that are known to have been drawn by eyewitnesses, such as the illustration of the 1878

Table 1



How Ante-bellum African Baptists Acquired Their Church Buildings

Table 2

Church name	Year	#	Description
Bluestone (Lunenburg)	1754/ 1776	1st	?
Bethel/ Bluestone (Lunenburg)	1800	2nd	?
Elam (Charles City Co.)	1810	1st	Log cabin
Gillfield (Petersburg)	1815	1st	"Red House" on Perry St.
Bute Street (Norfolk)	1816	1st	Old Anglican Church - left to blacks by mixed congregation
Elam (Charles City Co)	1818	2nd	?
Williamsburg	1818	1st	Frame carriage house
Alfred Street (Alexandria)	1818/ 1823	1st	Frame
Harrison Street (Petersburg)	1820	1st	Formed from the old Bluestone/Bethel congregation
Manchester	1823	1st	Frame, "slab church"
Manchester	=1828	2nd	Brick Methodist church
Bute St. (See Figure 7) (Norfolk)	1830	2nd	Old frame "Salt Box". Gambrel roof. No front windows, 3 6/6 per side. Central double door

African Baptist Churches Before the Turner Rebellion

Table 3

Church name	Year	#	Description
Bank St./ Bell (See Figure 9) (Norfolk)	1840	1st	Brick Presbyterian church, gabled dentiled roof. Front: 3 second-story windows, central is Venetian, 2 1st story; Side: 5 2nd-story, 3 1st. All with colored lintels & shutters on second-story. Front central door & semi-circular fanlight; side with square transom.
First African (See Figure 26) (Richmond)	1841	1st	Brick, intersecting-gable roof, left to black by mixed congregation. Federal crown lintels and shutters, central double doors at each gable and multiple side doors. Five windows per gabled front.
Gillfield (Petersburg)	1842	2nd	"White House" , held 250-300 people
Court Street (Lynchburg)	1843	1st	Brick theater (destroyed in fire in 1866). Originally built in 1820 on Court Street between 5th and 6th. Plain 1 story building which "looked more like a stable than an opera house (Chambers 1981:88).
Second African (Richmond)	1846	1st	Brick
Manchester	1854	3rd	Brick
Williamsburg (See Figure 25)	1854	2nd	Brick, Gabled roof. 2 front, 2-story high compass-headed windows; 4 windows per side. Central door with semi-circular transom.
Alfred Street (Alexandria)	1855	2nd	Brick
Shiloh (Fredericksburg)	1855	1st	Brick, gabled roof, left to blacks by mixed congregation. 2 separate front doors- 4 panels; 2 front second story windows. Six windows on sides, three per floor.
Court Street (Lynchburg)	1858	2nd	Tobacco factory
Third African/ Ebenezer (Richmond)	1858	1st	Frame
Gillfield (Petersburg)	1859	3rd	First brick

Ante-bellum African Baptist Churches After the Turner Rebellion

disaster at the Court Street Church in Lynchburg, may have imprecise architectural details (See Figure 8). For the purposes of this study, such illustrations are assumed to be accurate, but the problematic nature of the data should be apparent.

Other problems also make the interpretation of material culture a challenge. People from different cultures and ethnicities may invest identical material culture with distinct meanings which are not apparent in the material record. This contradicts the intuitive assumption that cultural difference between slave and master will be immediately evident. Dell Upton has pointed out this trap, noting that: "We want slave culture to be distinct and distinctive, and we want it to be represented in artifacts. We are suspicious of slave houses and goods that are indistinguishable from those of the masters" (Upton 1996:3). Cases where architecture appears to be obviously "ethnic" are, in fact, often forged by the majority group and reflect their perception of the minority, rather than the minority's perception of themselves (Upton 1996).

Upton's reminder also applies to the study of early ante-bellum African Baptist churches, as they were not

particularly distinctive and blended in with the rest of the churches in Virginia. Most early nineteenth century ante-bellum churches, African or White or mixed, were extremely plain. In Davis and Rawlings' words, "The number of purely functional churches without distinctive architectural style is considerably greater with surviving ante-bellum churches than surviving colonial churches. Some of the most characteristic of ante-bellum churches..are in but the plainest Classical Revival manner, so plain in fact that they are hard to categorize even to that degree" (1978:6-7).

Unlike the Anglican churches which Upton describes in Holy Things and Profane (1986), Baptist churches in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries did not initially use architecture to reinforce an elitist hierarchy. Both Black, White and mixed congregations built similar, primarily gable-roofed frame structures. The only distinction among them was that White and mixed congregations were able to construct brick buildings in the earlier period, which Black congregations could not afford (See Tables 2, 3, 4).

This similarity in the church buildings should not, however, be assumed to indicate that early African Baptist

Table 4

Church Name	Year	Number	Description
Richmond First Baptist	1789	1st (mixed)	Frame, one-story
Norfolk	1800	1st (mixed)	Anglican Borough Church
Richmond First Baptist (See Figure 26)	1802	2nd (mixed)	Brick
Alexandria	1803	1st (mixed)	Frame on Washington Street
Fredericksburg	1804	1st (mixed)	Frame
Cumberland (Norfolk) (See Figure 35)*	1816	2nd (white)	Brick, Greek Revival
Market Street (Petersburg)	1817	1st (white)	Brick, on Market Street
Fredericksburg	pre- 1818	2nd (mixed)	Frame, on Water Street
Fredericksburg	1818	3rd (mixed)	Brick, on Water Street
Richmond Second Baptist	1821	1st (mixed)	Brick
Lynchburg First Baptist	1821	1st (mixed)	Brick, plain on SW side of Church Street near 4th. 64' x 48'.
Lynchburg Second Baptist.	1827	1st/2nd (mixed)	Reunited with First Baptist. congregation in 1835. Frame, on Church Street near 9th. Improved in 1843, with gallery, belfry and baptistery added.
Alexandria	1829	2nd (mixed)	Old building burned, used Presbyterian Church.
Williamsburg (See Figure 29)	1830	1st (white)	Powder magazine
Third Baptist (Richmond)	1833	1st (mixed)	2 story, brick gable, central front door, 6 panel with fanlight. Five front square windows: Three second floor, 2 first. 12 windows, 6 on each floor on side.
Richmond Second Baptist. (See Figure 11)	1840	2nd (white)	Brick, larger building, steeple and bell
Market Street (Petersburg)	1841	2nd (white)	?
Richmond First Baptist (see Figure 10)	1841	3rd (white)	Greek Revival- 2 Doric columns, steeple

Urban White and Racially-Mixed Baptist Churches. 1789-1841

*This may be a later remodeling, and not the appearance of the church in 1816.

congregations assimilated to Euro-American culture. It may be reasonable to argue that acculturation was taking place, as this occurs "when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous, first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups" (Herskovits 1938:10). But *assimilation*, defined as one culture taking over another, causing the loss of the older cultural heritage and incorporation of the new values, did not necessarily take place.

Indeed, while the realities of life in America caused some changes in the cultural patterns of African-Americans, it is not clear that either culture necessarily strove to imitate the other, thereby erasing its heritage. Sobel has noted that in West African, slave-exporting coastal areas, "the rectangular gable-roof hut is..characteristic" (Sobel 1987:73). Many Africans brought with them a tradition of building small, light, rectangular cabins with gable roofs. These have also been adopted for worship purposes in America in structures like the Praise House of the Sea Islands of coastal South Carolina (Thaxton, forthcoming). So while the circular hut is most associated with African vernacular

housing, the rectangular gable-roof structure was certainly also part of Africa's extremely diverse heritage, and may have evolved separately despite its similar appearance.

Some of the early similarities may also have reflected economic realities. Since most of the early Baptists in Virginia, both Black and White, were poor, simplicity in church design served the dual purpose of modesty, which was a critical part of the early Baptists' doctrine, and low cost. Many congregations did not even have a specific plan for the appearance of a new church, and building committees often gave the master builder simplistic, functional instructions such as "build a new church in workmanlike fashion" (Townsend 1995:9). This, then, resulted in rough buildings, built with whatever materials were available. If the congregants already owned a building for worship, it was often recycled into a new building, as was the case in the construction of a new Court Street Church in Lynchburg.

However, as the White Baptists began to shy away from their more modest roots in the mid-nineteenth century, their church buildings became more elaborate and more clearly differentiated from those of Blacks. Wealthier individuals and slave-holders began to join Baptist churches in larger

numbers and their increased presence demanded architecture which reaffirmed elite social values. Furthermore, this demographic change corresponded with the Virginia-wide trend, which had begun in 1820 and would last until the Civil War, in which the Greek Revival style spread throughout all public architecture. Thus, Classical Revival style, particularly Greek and Roman Revival styles with Federal or Adamesque details, became increasingly popular in the church buildings of White congregations during the late ante-bellum period (Davis & Rawlings 1978:6) (See Tables 5, 6). However, these styles were noticeably absent from African Baptist churches (See Table 7).

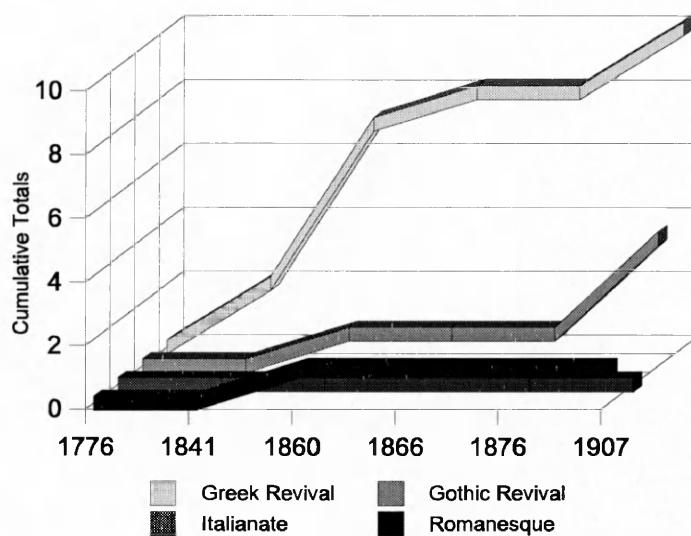
Gothic Revival was another stylistic option that appeared in the late nineteenth century. Comparison reveals that it was also unavailable or undesirable to African Baptist congregations. The Gothic style became popular as Virginia's elite extended their aesthetic sensibilities to a wider range of inspirational sources (Hamlin 1944:318). Nonetheless, ante-bellum White Baptist churches generally used Gothic Revival style for openings, and occasionally buttresses and battlements, rather than for their overall

Table 5

Church Name	Year	Number	Description
Third Baptist/Grace Street (Richmond)	1845	2nd (white)	Greek Revival- 6 Tuscan columns, elliptic louver in pediment; 2 front entrances. 6/6 windows with pilasters between them.
Manchester	1846	1st (white)	Old Plank Church
Freemason St. (Norfolk) (See Figure 20)	1850	1st (white)	Gothic with central tower & spire. Buttresses and central door, 2 front windows, multiple pinnacles
Lynchburg First Baptist.	1850	3rd (white)	Greek Revival on same site on Church Street
Alexandria (See Figure 34)	1852	3rd (white)	Romanesque Revival
Leigh Street (Richmond)	1853	1st (white)	Greek Revival - 6 Doric columns, Two front entrances with square transoms above.
Fredericksburg(See Figure 21)	1854/ 1855	4th (white)	Brick on Princess Anne
Petersburg Second Baptist.	1854	1st (white)	On Byrd Street
Manchester	1855	2nd (white)	Greek Revival - Four Ionic Columns with decorative friezes.
Williamsburg (See Figure 29)	1855	2nd (white)	Greek Revival-4 columns, 1 central front entrance, 6 long side windows divided by pilasters
Market street (Petersburg)	1856	4th (white)	Moved from earlier site due to grading of Market St.
Richmond Second Baptist	1866	3rd (white)	Greek Revival-8 Ionic columns, 3 double paneled front doors.
Lynchburg First Baptist. (See Figure 37)	1886	4th (white)	High Victorian Gothic. 140' x95'
Grace Street (See Figure 39)	1894	3rd (white)	Gothic
Manchester	1901	3rd (white)	Modernized Greek Revival
Richmond Second Baptist	1906	4th (white)	Greek Revival- Ionic columns
Alexandria	1907	4th (white)	Gothic

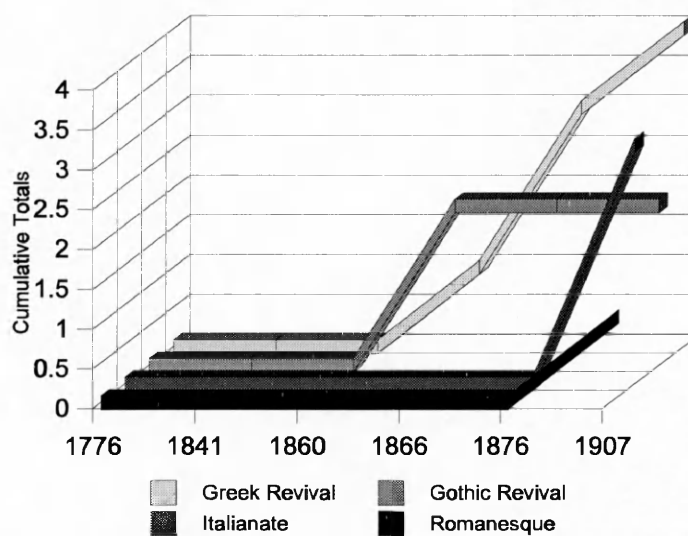
White Baptist Churches, 1845-1907
(Changing Buildings for Congregations Formed in the Ante-bellum Era)

Table 6



Stylistic Trends in Urban White Baptist Churches whose Congregations Formed in the Ante-bellum Era

Table 7



Stylistic Trends in African Baptist Churches whose Congregations Formed in the Ante-bellum Era

plan, perhaps in order to remain distinctive from the ornate Gothic churches built by Catholics (Davis & Rawlings 1976:7). While at least ten White Baptist ante-bellum churches in the Tidewater area were Greek Revival or Gothic Revival, (eight of these were built between 1840 and 1855), there is no evidence that the African Baptists in those same cities built similar churches until after Emancipation.

Interestingly, although the later ante-bellum African Baptist churches were usually not constructed in the most modern styles, their proportions were very much in keeping with the societal norms. Just as Townsend found that ante-bellum Protestant buildings in Connecticut were almost always a rectangle between a 3:5 and 4:5 ratio (Townsend 1995:138), so, too, were ante-bellum Virginia Baptist church buildings, both Black and White. There were also several examples of a 2:3 ratio, specifically, the African 1854 church in Manchester, the African 1855 church in Alexandria and the 1830 White Zion church in Williamsburg were all 40 ft. by 60 ft. At least one church was built to a 2:5 ratio, the racially-mixed 1804 Fredericksburg church, which some accounts claim measured 20 ft. by 50 ft. Some White congregations built larger churches while maintaining the

same ratio, like the Freemason church in Norfolk which maintained a 3:5 ratio in its 65 ft. by 105 ft. dimensions. Even in the post-bellum period when African Baptist churches also increased in size, they retained the same proportions, as attested to by the 60 ft. by 101 ft. Court Street Church, built in Lynchburg in 1880.

However, there are some instances where the African Baptist churches did not conform to this standard, and this may be attributed at least in part to a cultural difference in perception of aesthetic proportions. For example, John Vlach found that shotgun houses, a type of vernacular architecture based on African-American traditions, generally were about 10 ft. by 20 ft. (or 10 ft. by 21 ft. in some cases), a 1:2 ratio rarely found among the White residences (Vlach 1976). While there were no examples of White churches with these proportions, the Williamsburg African Baptist Church also had a 1:2 ratio, as it was 30 ft. by 60 ft.

The square Gillfield church also had proportions that were not found in contemporary White Baptist churches and might reflect differing aesthetics. Its dimensions were also similar to Black vernacular housing of the period, as both

were constructed with 1:1 ratios. The Gillfield church measured 30 ft. by 30 ft., and ante-bellum Black housing was often built 12 ft. by 12 ft. (Sobel 1987:117). Just as the 1:1 proportion was not found in White churches, neither was it found in White ante-bellum residences, which tended to be 16 ft. by 20 ft., a 4:5 ratio (Sobel 1987:117).

Church dimensions notwithstanding, the absence of more elaborate, non-functional architecture in African Baptist churches can, for the most part, be attributed to expense. The White elites maintained some control over the material culture of African Baptist congregations by restricting access to funds which would allow for more elaborate buildings. This could be done at the level of both the local and the regional association, as both were involved in raising funds for new buildings.

African Baptist churches were not entirely dependent monetarily on regional associations and local White (or parent) churches. Congregants also could raise funds for construction by holding concerts and fairs for the general public, renting out the current church (if one existed) and obtaining help from other African Baptist churches. Nonetheless, these avenues were not totally divorced from

White control, since they indirectly depended on the ability of Black congregations to obtain discretionary income (usually limited by the larger society) and the willingness of the general public to give money to a Black sponsoring organization. Unfortunately, it was in the best interest of the elite population to try to limit the funds available to African Baptist churches in order to remind the Africans of their lower social status. The elite may have felt that this in turn, would prevent free Blacks and slaves from behaving inappropriately, as "architecture clearly channels and acts upon later behavior" (Hodder 1993:8).

Nevertheless, some African Baptist churches did provide financial assistance to other African Baptist churches. For example, the First African Baptist Church in Richmond was known to be a willing donor and gave money to the Fredericksburg African Baptist Church in 1854 (Fitzgerald 1979:77).³ However, this only accounted for a small percentage of the money necessary to build a new structure. The way in which White churches raised the bulk of the money for a new building was a pew system whereby the church was

³ Ironically, the First African Baptist raised some of these funds by renting out their auditorium for lectures from which Blacks were barred.

erected on loans and then pews were sold to the wealthier members of the congregation. In 1841, this was done for the Greek Revival First Baptist Church in Richmond (First Baptist Church of Richmond 1839:60). The majority of free Blacks in cities such as Alexandria lived in abject poverty compared to the overall White population (Blomberg 1988:199). Thus, although their economic opportunities were certainly greater than those for slaves, they still lacked enough discretionary income to make pew sales feasible. Free Black churches such as Gillfield required a standard subscription from all congregants (Jackson 1937:13), but this still could not equal the revenue from pew sales in a White congregation. Therefore, elaborate buildings were outside the reach of African Baptist congregations.

One example of the clear constraints of expense on church appearance can be found in the Gillfield African Baptist Church. The first aspect affected was size. When the building was constructed in 1818, the hope was to make the square larger than 30 feet per side "if timber could be had" (Johnson 1903:14). Also, the choice of building materials was determined by cost. Since brick was more expensive than wood, Gillfield could barely afford a new brick building

even in 1859. "Many of the members did not think the church could ever build a brick church and pay for it, some of the deacons being among them" (Johnson 1903:18). Thus, African Baptist congregations were unable to construct their own brick buildings until the late ante-bellum period, the earliest being Richmond's Second African Baptist in 1846, while White and mixed Baptist congregations built them as early as 1802.

A final example of the affects of prohibitive cost on ante-bellum African Baptist churches can be found in the absence of church spires. In addition to their new Neo-Classical and Gothic Revival style buildings, some White Baptist congregations in the late ante-bellum period began to incorporate elaborate spires and bells. White congregations garnered prestige if they could obtain the highest steeple or the largest bells (Townsend 1995:146). For example, in Richmond the steeple was so important that it was added to the design of the First Baptist Church in 1841 even though the steeple fit neither the Greek Revival style nor the wishes of the architect (See Figure 10). The architect was probably not "ever reconciled to the monstrous wooden bell tower that topped the old First Baptist" (Scott

1950:110). A similarly inappropriate spire was built in 1845 on another Greek Revival Style church, St. Paul's, much to the consternation of its architect. Even the Second Baptist Church in Richmond acquired a large steeple and bell in 1840 (See Figure 11).

The relative absence of steeples from ante-bellum African Baptist churches, whether due to expense or choice, prevented them from competing on equal footing with the wealthier White churches, and allowed the elite to assert their social pre-eminence while jostling for higher stature within the aristocracy. The African Baptist churches might have louvers or cupolas but not true spires. The Bank Street Church was exceptional in that it inherited a bell from the prior Presbyterian congregation, but this is the only known instance. Thus, African congregations in the ante-bellum period were once again excluded from the White elite quest for prestige, probably because of its prohibitive cost.⁴

⁴This is not to say that African Baptist churches were unconcerned with prestige. Instead, their competition was confined within the community of Black churches and channeled through other avenues than steeples, at least until after Emancipation, as will be demonstrated in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

CHURCH DEMOGRAPHICS AND ADAPTATIONS IN THE DECADE FOLLOWING THE TURNER REBELLION, 1832-1842

As we have seen, White Baptist church architecture in the late ante-bellum period evolved from simple frame or brick gable roofed structures to more elaborate Neo-classical or, occasionally, part-Gothic buildings. Black churches also followed this pattern, but not until after Emancipation. Although slaves and free Blacks could not raise enough funds on their own to build the more elaborate structures, more importantly, the White community would not support the construction of even the most functional building after the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831. No African-American churches were either constructed or donated by parent congregations for ten years after the rebellion. Clearly, White sentiment during this time of legislative repression affected African Baptist construction opportunities.

The revolt, which had profound consequences for African

Baptist churches, took place in Southampton, Virginia. Its leader, Nat Turner, was a Black Baptist who did some lay preaching. His ability to instigate a slave revolt confirmed all the fears that slave holders had been harboring. The result was that in Virginia in 1831, all African Baptist churches were forcibly closed for the better part of a year and, when they reopened, they were forced to accept White preachers and leadership. One law enacted by the General Assembly in 1832 specified that "no Negro, ordained, licensed or otherwise" could hold religious assemblies at any time day or night" (Jackson 1931:204). Before this, acts relating to unlawful assemblages of slaves or free Blacks did not apply to worship. Furthermore, by 1848 neither free Blacks nor slaves could assemble at night for any purpose, nor read during the day.

All this legislation effectively curtailed what had been a relatively independent existence for African Baptist churches. Even worshipers at free Black churches, such as the one in Manchester, could no longer come and go as they pleased. When the African Baptist meeting house reopened in 1836, the "church [was] locked at all times except when in use and police secured the key." Times of worship were

strictly regulated, and allowed only in the "forenoon and concluded by two" (Shores 1992).

Because many White Baptists felt they had been very generous to Blacks and slaves, they felt betrayed by the Turner rebellion. After the revolt, many White regional associations joined with the legislature in an attempt to punish and impose White ideology on recalcitrant African Baptist Churches. The feeling of betrayal was voiced by the Portsmouth Baptist Association in 1832: "The insurrection in Southampton..has produced a most lamentable effect upon the religious feelings of many of our churches and especially those in the immediate vicinity of the dreadful tragedy" (Sobel 1979:168).

One way the Black Baptist community responded was by readjusting "found" architecture to their own purpose in order to create and sustain all Black congregations at a time when such things were seen as very threatening. In 1843, the Blacks in Lynchburg were able to split off from their parent congregation by holding meetings in a former theater and later in a tobacco factory (1858). The Bank Street congregation in Norfolk used a brick Presbyterian church for its first meetinghouse in 1840 (See Figure 9).

This adaptation was not entirely new to African Baptist congregations; the Williamsburg church converted a carriage house in 1818 for use in worship, and the Manchester church used a brick Methodist building in 1828. However, such adaptation became even more critical in the two decades following the rebellion.

Although the Nat Turner Rebellion clearly made construction of African Baptist churches difficult in the following decade, in many cases the crackdown did little to discourage membership. In fact, the new restrictions seemed to have the opposite effect, causing considerable membership increases in half of the African Baptist Churches after 1831. Of the six churches in existence, three increased significantly in population after the rebellion, perhaps in reaction to the power struggle. All were members of either the Dover or Portsmouth Associations. Dover was the more successful of the two in its attempt to subjugate the African churches in its midst. But, while the Williamsburg African Baptist Church's membership decreased significantly owing to the actions of the Dover Association, at Elam Baptist Church, membership doubled. In the eight years between 1830 and 1838, Elam Baptist Church increased from 73

to 187 members. Perhaps the Dover Association felt the urban church in Williamsburg was more threatening than the smaller rural Elam Church and so did not eject Elam from its membership.

Despite its rhetoric of "lamentable effects," the Portsmouth Association was also unable to discourage African Baptist Church membership. At least in Petersburg, both African Baptist churches increased in size after the rebellion. At the Harrison Street Church, membership almost doubled from 564 to 1,012 in the eight-year period after the revolt (1832-1840). Unfortunately the population numbers for Gillfield are scanty, but over the 20-year period between 1820 and 1840, the membership also almost doubled: from 422 in 1820 to 868 in 1840.

Of the remaining churches in existence before 1831, membership decreased in two, and for one, Manchester, the population statistics are unavailable. However, only the Williamsburg decrease, from 619 to 315 in the eight-year period between 1830 and 1838, is relevant. A drop in membership at the Bute Street Church in Norfolk can be attributed to a large section of the population leaving to found the new Bell Church, rather than the affects of the

Turner Revolt.

The Dover Association successfully fragmented the Williamsburg African Baptist Church by ejecting it from membership in 1832 and admitting the White Williamsburg "Zion" Baptist Church which had been applying since 1830 (Dorsey 1978:4). Perhaps the association hoped that closing the Black church would attract slave members to the White Baptist church and that thus slave religious life would once again be under more rigorous control. Whether or not this was the intent, it appears to be the result because when the Black church reopened, its membership shrank from 700 to 413 while Black membership in the White church began to grow (Dorsey 1978:10).

By 1838, the primarily White Zion church had 180 Black members, and the Williamsburg African Church's total membership had dropped to 351. In 1839, the Dover Association ordered the African church to dissolve, which it did (Dorsey 1978:10). Clearly, the shift of Blacks and slaves from their own church to a primarily White church was disempowering, and the Dover Association in this way managed to punish the Williamsburg African Baptist Congregation for the rebellion led by their "brothers" in 1831. Even though

the African Baptist church reopened in 1843, its total congregation did not increase beyond that of the Black membership of the Zion church again until after the Civil War. Furthermore, by this time the Black church's administration was definitively White and the pastor of the White church, Servant Jones, preached to the Black church congregation.

CHAPTER V

CHURCH APPEARANCE IN THE POST-BELLUM PERIOD

In contrast with the moderate growth of new African Baptist congregations and the modest appearance of churches during the ante-bellum era, Emancipation brought astounding changes. Many churches splintered into several congregations, and the first separate Black regional association, Shiloh Baptist, was formed. The accelerating growth of new congregations after the war was illustrated in Richmond; while only five African Baptist churches were created in the 40 years between 1821 and the civil war, 28 were created in the following 40 years, 15 in the first 20 years alone.

After the war, African Baptist churches also began to incorporate some of the popular styles of the period (See Table 8). Indeed, the very first church built in 1865, erected for the Harrison Street Baptist Church congregation in Petersburg, was said to have been built in impressive Gothic style (See Figure 12). During the next eleven years,

Table 8

Church Name	Year	#	Description
Harrison Street (See Figure 12) (Petersburg)	1865	2nd	Gothic
Fourth African (Richmond)	1865	1st	Frame on Chiamboro Hill, then in Union barracks
Second African (Richmond)	1866	2nd	Dill's bakery
Bank Street/ Bell (See Figure 13) (Norfolk)	1866	2nd	Modified Gothic-central steeple
Second African (See Figure 14) (Richmond)	1866	3rd	Greek Revival, stuccoed brick, 4 Doric columns
Court Street (See Figure 8) (Lynchburg)	1867	3rd	Federal, gable roof, 3 stories
Third African/Ebenezer (See Figure 15) (Richmond)	1873	2nd	Greek Revival: Stuccoed brick, Ionic columns without flutes
Fourth African (Richmond)	1875	2nd	Larger frame, gabled roof
First African (See Figure 16) (Richmond)	1876	2nd	Greek revival, brick, two Doric columns
Gillfield (See Figure 17) (Petersburg)	1879	4th	Italianate, gabled roof, 2 side towers: 1 parapet
Court Street (See Figure 19) (Lynchburg)	1880	4th	Italianate-center steeple layout, tower has mansard roof, same location as prior church
Alfred Street (See Figure 18) (Alexandria)	1880	3rd	Facade revamped, brick, Italianate
Harrison Street (See Figure 36) (Petersburg)	1881	3rd	Brick
Fourth African (See Figure 38) (Richmond)	1884	3rd	Greek Revival
Bute Street (See Figure 24) (Norfolk)	1887	3rd	Italianate, brick, gabled roof,
Shiloh - Old site (See Figure 31) (Fredericksburg)	1887	2nd	Prior church collapsed, brick. congregation split
Shiloh - New site (Fredericksburg)	1887	1st	Brick, gabled, boxed cornice
Manchester	1892	4th	Gabled roof & side steeple
Bute Street (See Figure 22) (Norfolk)	1906	4th	Rusticated stone, Romanesque Revival

Postbellum African Baptist Churches Through 1910
(Changing Buildings for Congregations Formed in the Ante-bellum Era)

one additional Gothic styled church was built by African Baptists, the new Norfolk Bank Street Church which was reconstructed in 1866 (See Figure 13). Also, three of the African Baptist congregations in Richmond constructed new buildings in Greek Revival style: The Second, Third and First African Baptist Churches, built in 1866, 1873 and 1876 respectively (See Figures 14, 15, 16).

Some post-bellum African Baptist churches did not immediately adopt the newer, ornate architectural styles, but instead incorporated the more subtle Federal details that had first emerged in elite residences at the turn of the nineteenth century. In 1867, the Court Street Baptist congregation in Lynchburg built a new church with a simple gabled roof, but this building was much larger than any known ante-bellum African Baptist church. Its embellishments incorporated Federal style details such as plain central panels surrounded with key Greek motifs on the lintels and above the doors (See Figure 8). Furthermore, the church was three stories high and had huge doors through which eight people could walk abreast, a marked contrast from the simple one- or two-story churches typical before the war.

In the period between 1879 and 1880, African Baptist

churches began to incorporate an even newer architectural craze, Italianate architecture. During this time three Italianate churches were built: the 1879 Gillfield Church in Petersburg, the 1880 Alfred Street Church in Alexandria, and the 1880 Court Street Church in Lynchburg (See Figures 17, 18, 19).

While Greek Revival and Gothic African Baptist churches first emerged immediately after Emancipation, the turning point for the involvement of architects in Black church design and construction coincided with the slightly later Italianate and Roman Revival styles. In contrast, White churches used well-known architects to design their buildings in the late ante-bellum period. For example, Thomas U. Walter designed the Richmond First Baptist Church (1838) and inspired a spate of Greek Revival building throughout the city (See Figure 10). Walter also designed the ornate Gothic Freemason Baptist Church (1848) in Norfolk (See Figure 20). Another architect designing for a White ante-bellum church was J.B. Benwick, who created an ornate Gothic structure for the Fredericksburg Baptist Church (1855) (See Figure 21). But it was not until the later post-bellum period that such architects designed Black

churches as well: R.C. Burkholder designed the Court Street Baptist Church in Lynchburg in 1880 (although African-American artisans assisted with church construction and decoration), and Reuban Hart designed the Bute Street Baptist Church in Norfolk in 1906, a virtual clone of the predominantly White Portsmouth Baptist Church (See Figures 19, 22).

Changes in the use of steeples by African Baptist congregations also emerged after Emancipation. The Court Street Church in Lynchburg was not only the largest church building in 1880, its spire also rose 167 feet from ground level making it the tallest object on the downtown skyline (See Figure 19). The Bank Street Church in Norfolk also changed to a central steeple layout in 1886, and in 1888 their steeple was "only a little above the roof line, but they [were] raising money to increase its elevation" (Nowitzky 1888:98) (See Figure 13 for the result). Finally, the Harrison Street Church in Petersburg added a brick tower and spire in 1881 (See Figure 36).

Other interesting architectural features on African Baptist churches include pinnacles, which appear after Emancipation and may be a form of subordinate "pseudo-

spire." These details could have been copied from books such as Samuel Sloan's *Model Architect*, published in 1853, which had an illustration of a "Village Church" with pinnacles (See Figure 23). Unlike Sloan's illustration and most contemporary White Baptist churches, African Baptist churches used pinnacles without a prominent central spire. These independent turrets added character to the overall appearance of the Bute Street Church in Norfolk in 1887, the Ebenezer Church in Richmond in 1873, and the Alfred Street Church in Alexandria in 1880 (See Figure 24, 15, 18).

In Alexandria, octagonal pinnacles were used in a traditional Gothic manner on top of side pilasters and were topped with fleur-de-lis finials. The Bute Street Church and Ebenezer Church added pinnacles without a pier component; the Norfolk church used the pinnacles to cap the gable in a manner sometimes referred to as a "hip-knob," and the Richmond church used them on a cupola. The Williamsburg Church around 1880 also had a slightly different type of "pseudo-spire" which is not a pinnacle but a pyramid on the front of the gable (See Figure 25). These small decorative details may have enhanced pride within the Black community in instances where real spires were unattainable.

At first glance, the reasons for church growth and the emergence of new architectural styles in the early post-bellum period are unclear. Certainly it was not a drastic change in the financial situation of the newly emancipated which spawned the change in church architecture; freed industrial workers experienced almost no increase in economic opportunities during Reconstruction, and most still worked in unskilled positions. Only 15% of Black males in the Reconstruction period were craftspeople or professionals (Morgan 1992:199). In fact, many freedmen were financially worse off, as factories would not pay for the medical care formerly provided by masters and often even cut the wage by a third or a half (Morgan 1992:201).

Instead, part of the growth in churches and the appearance of new architectural styles may be attributable to the growing urban Black population, as freed people left the country for urban areas such as Richmond, Petersburg and Lynchburg to gain employment in skilled or nonagricultural positions (Morgan 1992:145). Larger congregations gave churches a larger pool from which to solicit financial contributions.

Additionally, as newly freed people attempted to

exploit new opportunities in the political arena and elsewhere, the church began to play an increasingly vital role. While African Baptist churches had always been central to the African-American community, they were more critical to post-bellum infrastructure, providing political forums as well as educational and other opportunities. As the community diversified, the number of churches also grew (Lewis 1991:23).

Because the church played a critical role in the post-bellum period, congregants were willing to make financial sacrifices to obtain prestigious architecture and expensive goods that would be largely unavailable to their own individual households. In an archaeological study of Alexandria, Cressy found few imported ceramics in the poor peripheral areas in the early nineteenth century and determined that by the mid-nineteenth century there was a great deal more coarseware in the periphery than the core (Cressy et. al. 1982). However, an excavation of the African Baptist church lot revealed a preponderance of refined earthenware and some imports. These may be attributed to the desire of the Black community to devote what little resources they had to the church rather than to obtaining

personal possessions. The archaeological excavation of the site in 1991 recovered 215 ceramics, including 99 pieces of pearlware, 22 pieces of creamware, 27 pieces of yellow-ware and small amounts of Jackfield, Astbury, Whiteware, Chinese porcelain, stoneware and coarse earthenware (Walker, Pappas 1992).

Not surprisingly, although post-bellum African Baptist churches were much more elaborate than their ante-bellum predecessors, expense still constrained stylistic options. The churches in the early post-bellum period all had Doric or Tuscan columns, which were the easiest and cheapest of the Greek orders to build (Lane 1984:195). Also details such as Federal frets on lintels of the Court Street Baptist Church were lifted from Asher Benjamin's 1830 pattern book The Practical House Carpenter, which was the most popular book of the period owing to its simplicity (Lane 1984:195).

CHAPTER VI

A CASE STUDY OF RICHMOND

The broader patterns in African Baptist church location and appearance that have been examined thus far are significant, but to some extent fail to take into account the differing histories of Virginia's cities. Variations in the economic and social background of each city could subtly influence the African Baptist churches in ways that are not initially apparent. Therefore, a detailed, contextual review of the first two African Baptist churches in Richmond follows.

Of all the cities in Virginia, Richmond had the largest number of ante-bellum African churches. This is not surprising since Richmond also had the largest ante-bellum Black population, comprising 50% of its total population in 1820. Richmond was already the twelfth or thirteenth largest city in the U.S. by 1770, and when it became the capital in 1780, this prompted expansion and attracted all sorts seeking a better living. Furthermore, manpower in

Richmond was in great demand because of the high volume of trade and availability of valuable resources such as coal. Thus, slaves were often hired from the surrounding countryside, and by 1850, 90% of the bourgeoisie owned slaves (Rachleff 1989:4).

The number of African Baptist churches built in the city may partly be the result of the unusual freedom enjoyed by slaves involved in local commerce. As the economy became increasingly industrialized, slaves and free Blacks began to play an important role in the coal mines, iron ore processing, and tobacco factories. Of these occupations, that of tobacco factory worker afforded the most opportunities for slave independence. These slaves were allowed to earn what was called "overwork" money, with which they could do what they liked. Such income aided the proliferation of African Baptist churches because it could be used to support the church. Also, factory dormitories could not adequately house all of these workers, so they were provided money for food and lodging, which thus allowed slaves a larger measure of autonomy.

But the benefits experienced by the large numbers of African-Americans working in industry were tempered by

periodic restrictions resulting from Richmond's history of slave rebellion. Gabriel Prosser's unsuccessful slave revolt in Richmond in 1800 was clearly inspired by religious meetings, which undoubtably changed slave-holder attitudes toward the African Baptist churches in the city. Like Nat Turner, Gabriel Prosser was a Baptist lay-preacher who contacted over 1,000 slaves in Richmond on August 30, 1800, in order to march into Richmond and kill all Whites. Although the plan was aborted, the incident prompted legislation in 1805 requiring slaves to get permission from their masters to attend church, and Black deacons were ordered to oversee all Black church members.

Prosser's insurrection also caused reactions in the regional association. Prior to this point, the Dover Association had allowed slaves and free Black male members to exercise some power in the church. But in 1801, the Dover Association stated that "no person is entitled to exercise authority in the church whose situation in social life renders it his duty to be under obedience to the authority of another, such as minor sons and servants" (Rappahannock 1850:110). Although slaves could still be deacons, according to the association they should no longer be ordained

(Rappahannock 1850:102). Semple explained that "The degraded state of the minds of slaves rendered them totally incompetent in the task of judging correctly respecting the business of the Church" (Semple 1894:130).

Perhaps as a result of the justifiable fear of future slave uprisings, Richmond African Baptist churches all evolved from and to some degree were supervised by their parent churches. Other cities, such as Petersburg, that had not experienced any uprisings had African Baptist churches that existed completely independently of any White congregation. Thus, the circumstances of the African Baptist church in Richmond were unique and must be understood in order to correctly interpret the relationship between the White church and offspring Black congregations.

The African Baptist Church sprung from the First Baptist Church, which was founded in 1798. The congregation in these early years was racially mixed and the church building was relatively modest both in terms of architecture and location. It was located on Cary Street between Second and Third, which was in the more peripheral Penitentiary Bottoms area, not far from the later location of the Second African Baptist Church. The location was convenient because

it was "near the Penitentiary Ponds, convenient for immersion," but the area was not a good one and the main reason the church was there was "..for want of a better place of worship" (First Baptist 1955:13).

Subsequent to Prosser's insurrection, the church's appearance, location, and attitude toward its Black congregants began to change. In 1802, the congregation built a new, more impressive structure in the core area on the corner of 14th Street (now College) and H Street (now Broad). It was the earliest church erected in the highly sought after Court End neighborhood. Initially a gable-roof brick building, the church then became cruciform in shape with an intersecting gable.

The more monumental cruciform building clearly reflected a transition from Baptist ideas of simplicity and equality to the increasingly ostentatious values of wealthier slave holders (See Figure 26). The building had entrances on all three ends, and five shuttered six-over-six paneled windows with crown-shaped lintels. Transoms were located above the central windows, and a light above the main entry. No longer content with baptisms in a nearby pond, the church installed a baptismal pool around 1836 with

Doric columns around it and multiple galleries (First Baptist Church of Richmond 1836:45). The church auditorium was also impressive, the largest in the city, and held the Constitutional Convention of 1829-30.

Changes in architecture corresponded with changes in church policy toward African-American congregants. Although the First Baptist Church did not initially heed the instructions of the Dover Association, allowing five Blacks to preach and seven to exhort during the 1820s, the church began to rethink the wisdom of allowing Blacks such a large role. By 1829, the church revoked its license for all Black preachers, and they were never reinstated. After 1831 it became illegal for Blacks to preach throughout the state. In 1841, the Whites, feeling overwhelmed by the growing Black presence in the church as well as space limitations, built an even newer church and donated the older building to the Blacks. In a letter to the Dover Association, the White congregants explained: "...their numbers call for a larger place of meeting and their peculiar habits, views and prejudices demand peculiar instruction" (First Baptist Church of Richmond 1839:61-62). The Black church had 1,708 congregants upon inception and was the largest church in the

Dover Association.

The new, even more elaborate all-White Baptist Church was erected on the northwest corner of 12th and Broad Streets with only 387 White members (First Baptist Church of Richmond 1841:9). The architect, Thomas U. Walter of Philadelphia, also designed the dome of the U.S. Capitol and ten other formal buildings in Virginia. His Greek Revival design became so popular that "at least four Baptist churches were modeled directly after it" (Loth 1986:381). The building had only two Doric columns in the front with two pilasters on either side. The frieze was decorated with vertical lines. On the sides were six-over-six pane windows with pilasters between them, and the church had an octagonal lantern and spire (See Figure 10).

Meanwhile, the First African Baptist Church attempted to circumvent the increasing restrictions it experienced in the wake of the Turner Rebellion. Although the congregation was forced to accept Dr. Ryland, a White minister, his control over the church was not as thorough as one might expect. Ryland allowed Black exhorters and deacons to lead the congregation in prayer, and although not licensed preachers, they were more popular than Ryland's own sermons.

Ryland also permitted the congregation to play an active role in the service, choosing their own hymns and breaking into spontaneous songs. After Ryland left, the congregation would stay and pray, which violated the strict laws against unsupervised prayer.

Additional negotiations of power and control between African and White Baptists took place. A plan created by the three White churches in July 8, 1841, stipulated that a White overseeing committee would approve the church's deacons, appoint a clerk and treasurer, and choose the pastor (with concurrence of the majority of Black deacons), and resolve any conflicts. This plan also required that meetings only take place in the daytime and that the church send White delegates to the Dover Association (First Baptist Church of Richmond 1841:4). However, despite these extensive restrictions, most daily business was taken care of by the 30 members of the Black board of deacons who were accountable to the congregation.

Also, although the appearance of the First African Baptist Church was not modified until the post-bellum period, the congregation was able to re-interpret the building's architecture in a way that subverted the White

power structure. The African Baptists reassigned the meaning of the galleries, from "undesirable" where low status (i.e. African-American) individuals were forced to sit, to a location for "outsiders". The Religious Herald described the seating on September 3, 1857: "At the First African Baptist Church in Richmond men occupied seats on the left side of the center aisle, women sat on the right side of the sanctuary, and White visitors sat in the gallery" (Daniel 1971:5). Thus, any Whites visiting the church would find themselves relegated to the very balcony where Blacks were traditionally found, a way of subtly undermining the social hierarchy!

The Second Baptist Church in Richmond also spawned its own African Baptist Church, and its evolution very closely traced that of the First Baptist. The racially-mixed Second Baptist Church was organized in 1820, and its initial appearance and location in the city was once again not tied to the elite. In 1821, a lot 60 ft. by 107 ft. on 11th Street between Main and Carey was purchased for \$1,035.00 (Ellyson 1970:7) and the brick foundation laid in 1822. It was the only church in this area of town, and the neighborhood was in disrepair, as most business was

transacted west of Schockoe Creek. As late as 1845, "not over \$500 dollars had been spent on Main and Cary west of Seventh. They are in very nearly the same situation nature placed them" (Scott 1950:131).

The church building did not have the luxuries that were becoming part of the First Baptist Church. The Second Baptist Church was not lavish in plan, was moderate in size, and had no baptistery, although congregants were invited to use that of the First Baptist after 1836. The building was unlikely to have been distinctive, as it was later used as a tobacco factory and furniture warehouse.

After its first two decades, the Second Baptist Church began to take on the trappings of a more prestigious institution, mirroring the progress of the First Baptist Church. A new larger, brick Second Baptist Church was built in 1840 on Main and 6th Street for \$40,000 (Ellyson 1970:21) (See Figure 11). The new church was built with the "foundations of a fortress" and its portico, bell and steeple were more imposing than those of the First Baptist Church (Scott 1950). The steeple was twice the height of the building.

As before, the Black congregants split from the parent

church, and in 1846, a new African Baptist Church appeared in Richmond. Slaves built a brick church on 105 East Byrd Street which became the Second African Baptist Church. The church had 57 members composed of 10 families. Unlike the First African Church, it was in the primarily poor and Black Penitentiary Bottom area (Scott 1950:203). The building burned in 1866, and after the fire, for a while, members worshiped in Dill's old bakery on the corner of Delay and Foushee (Historical Records Survey 1940:15).

As shown in this case study, generalizations made about the evolution of the African Baptist Church in Virginia must be qualified by the effects of specific events and lifestyles in different cities. In Richmond, events triggering fears of rebellion resulted in an extremely paternal relationship between White and Black churches that was not present in every city. Rather than evolving separately, the African Baptist churches were offspring of White parent churches, and as a result of inheriting buildings, were forced to reinterpret architecture in ways that were not always visible.

CONCLUSIONS

This analysis has demonstrated that changes in the composition and attitudes of Virginia's Baptists in the mid-nineteenth century were reflected in a growing disparity between Anglo and African Baptist church material culture. The physical appearances of White and Black Baptist churches were similar in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as the emphasis on simplicity and the Baptists' abolitionist stance discouraged ornate architectural styles. But by the 1820's Whites began using formal architectural styles to distinguish themselves from the plain African Baptist churches. This attitudinal change was also reflected in the forced movement of African Baptist churches from the countryside to urban areas.

However, not all of the hypotheses presented in the preceding study were clearly supported by the data. In terms of location within urban areas, although African Baptist churches were most prevalent in the periphery, in keeping with Sjoberg's model, it was clear that specific events and

attitudes within each city exerted a large influence on church location. In this case, examining the history of each congregation and the city in which it was located was a more useful tool in predicting African Baptist church locations than any model based on access to wealth and resources.

Another problematic hypothesis posited African Baptist material culture displaying evidence of resistance in the ante-bellum era. As was discussed, the number of churches built specifically by African Baptist congregations was very small, and this, combined with the logical constraints of expense, resulted in an analysis focused more on meaningful choices made by the White Baptists to contrast with African Baptist material culture, rather than the choices made by the African Baptists themselves. Although there were a few instances of African Americans clearly resisting the conventions of White society through avenues such as unique building ratios, this was rare.

Resistance for African Baptist congregations, especially in the years following the Turner Rebellion, tended not to manifest in unique African Baptist church appearances. Instead, African Baptist resistance became

apparent by understanding different meanings assigned to identical appearances, as discussed in the study of Richmond's First African Baptist Church. Resistance was also reflected in other ways, such as increasing numbers of African Baptist congregants in times when new church structures were forbidden.

However, with the systemic changes wrought by Emancipation, African Baptists may have had more opportunities to assert their equality and their unique heritage symbolically. This work has shown that in the post-bellum era the appearance of African Baptist churches differed from their ante-bellum predecessors, becoming more elaborate and similar to their White counterparts. The message of equality broadcast through material culture and intended for the larger population may have also incorporated symbols of unity and African heritage which had meaning only for the African Baptist congregants.

An issue that was beyond the scope of this analysis, but certainly requires future exploration, is the ways in which African Baptist Churches of the twentieth-century used smaller decorative elements such as stained glass and brickwork to reflect the duality of the African Baptist

identity: incorporating double-voiced symbolism which could be reflect both Christian and African traditions.

For example, the Gillfield Church added stained glass windows to its 1879 building in 1941. A circle was central in each window, potentially representing the all-seeing eye, a symbol with African roots, or the rising sun (Gundaker, personal communication 1997). Although identical shapes might be found on contemporary White churches, they would have an additional layer of meaning for African Baptist churches, making them more desirable. Similar shapes were also found on Richmond's Fourth Baptist Church and the Shiloh Church in Fredericksburg in the early twentieth century. In terms of brickwork, it seems that churches may have used colored bricks to make irregular or distinctive "quilt-like" patterns which may have had special meaning for the African Baptist congregations. These concepts certainly suggest a fertile area for future research.

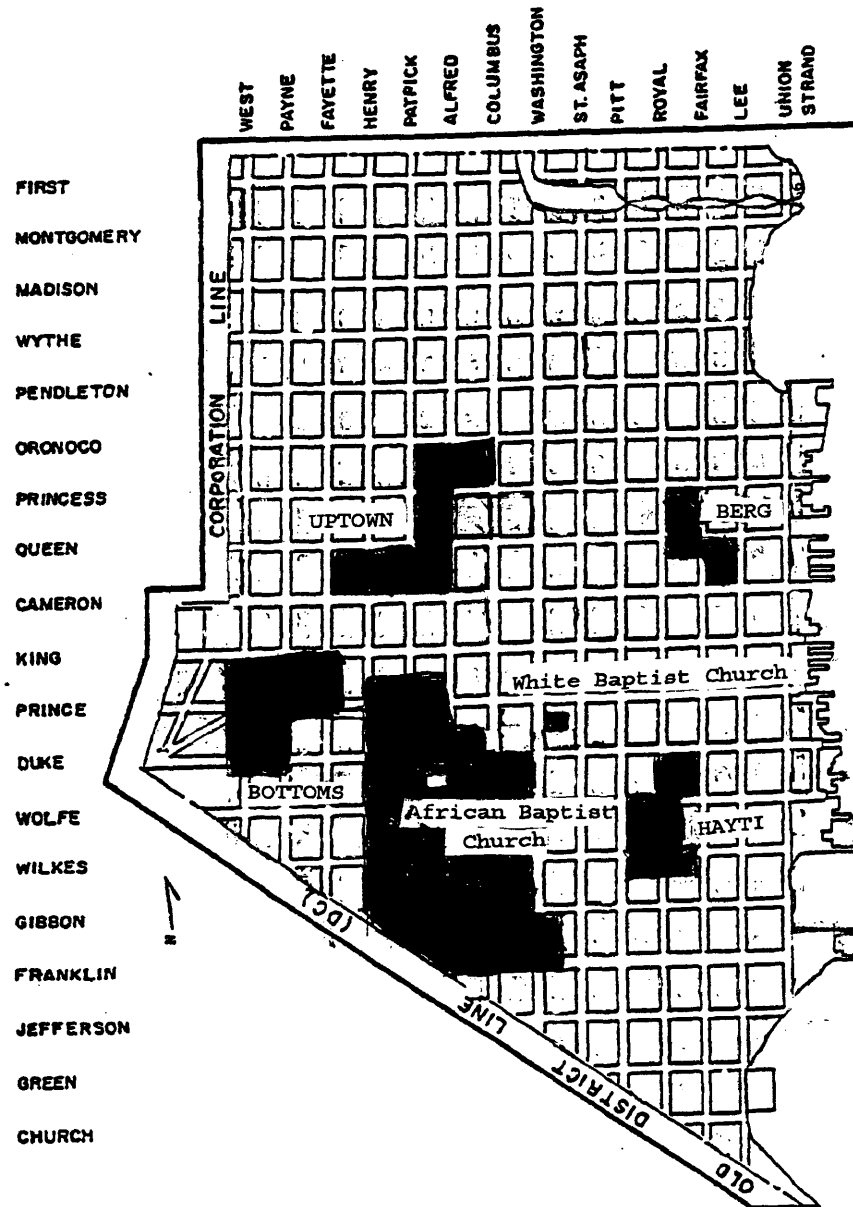
It should now be apparent that in all of Virginia's cities, the White, racially-mixed, and African Baptist congregations struggled to make statements about their power and prestige through architecture and differing interpretations of available spaces. Although it is

perilous to attempt to uncover the motivations and emic meanings assigned by these past individuals, the comparisons and contrasts of material culture in the preceding analysis produced ideas that can be launching points for further discovery. Since the symbolic paradigm that was applied recognizes that it is difficult to discover the real past apart from societal and personal biases, it is up to the reader to judge how well the proposed meanings fit with the data, and even if this analysis has not succeeded in reaching the real past, it may be a stepping stone for future, better-fitting, and more comprehensive analyses.

APPENDIX

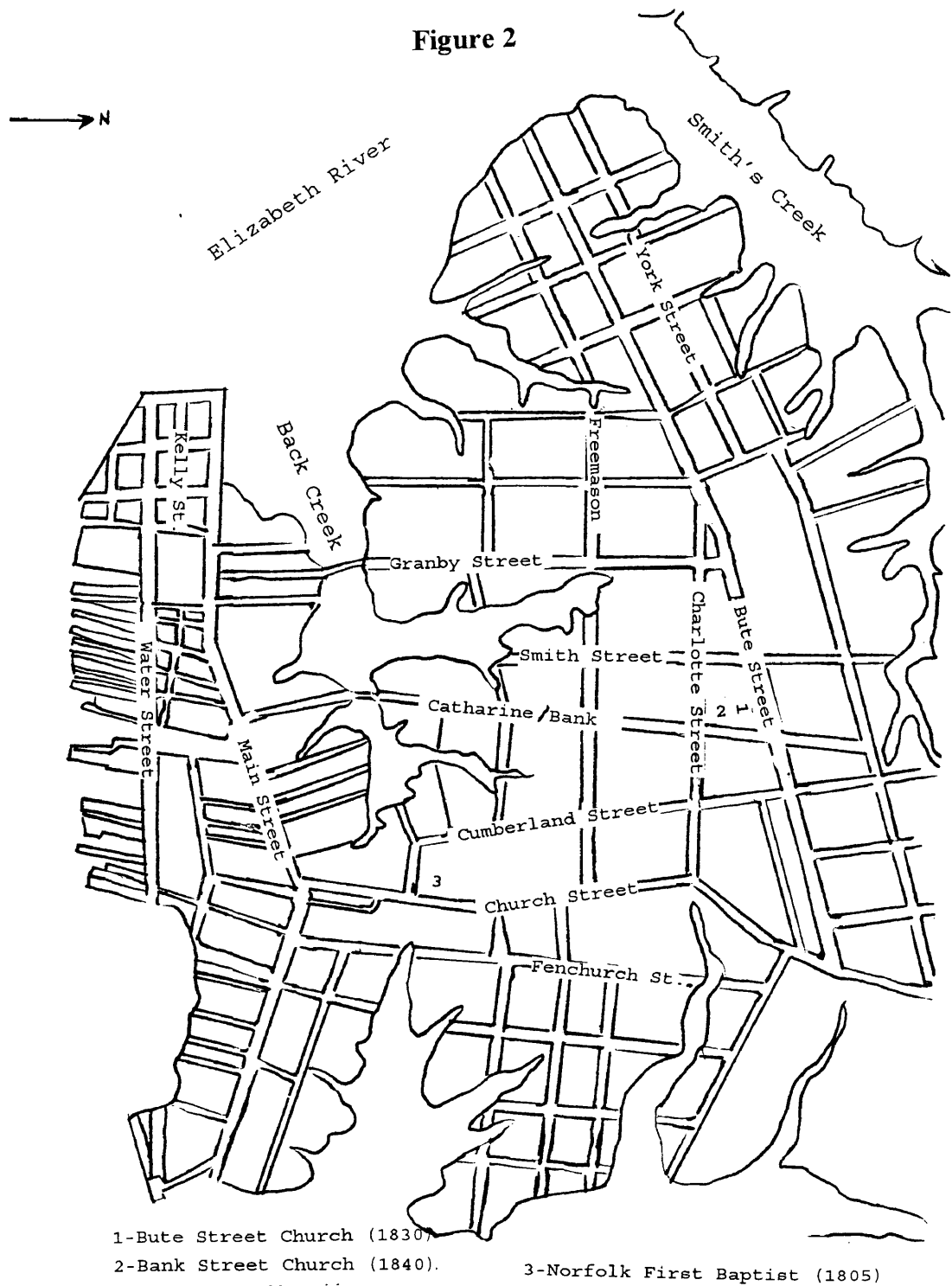
MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE CHURCH BUILDINGS

Figure 1



A map of Alexandria highlighting four Black residential areas in the nineteenth-century, and comparing the location of the 1818 African Baptist and 1804 White Baptist churches (Adapted from Blomberg, 1988)

Figure 2



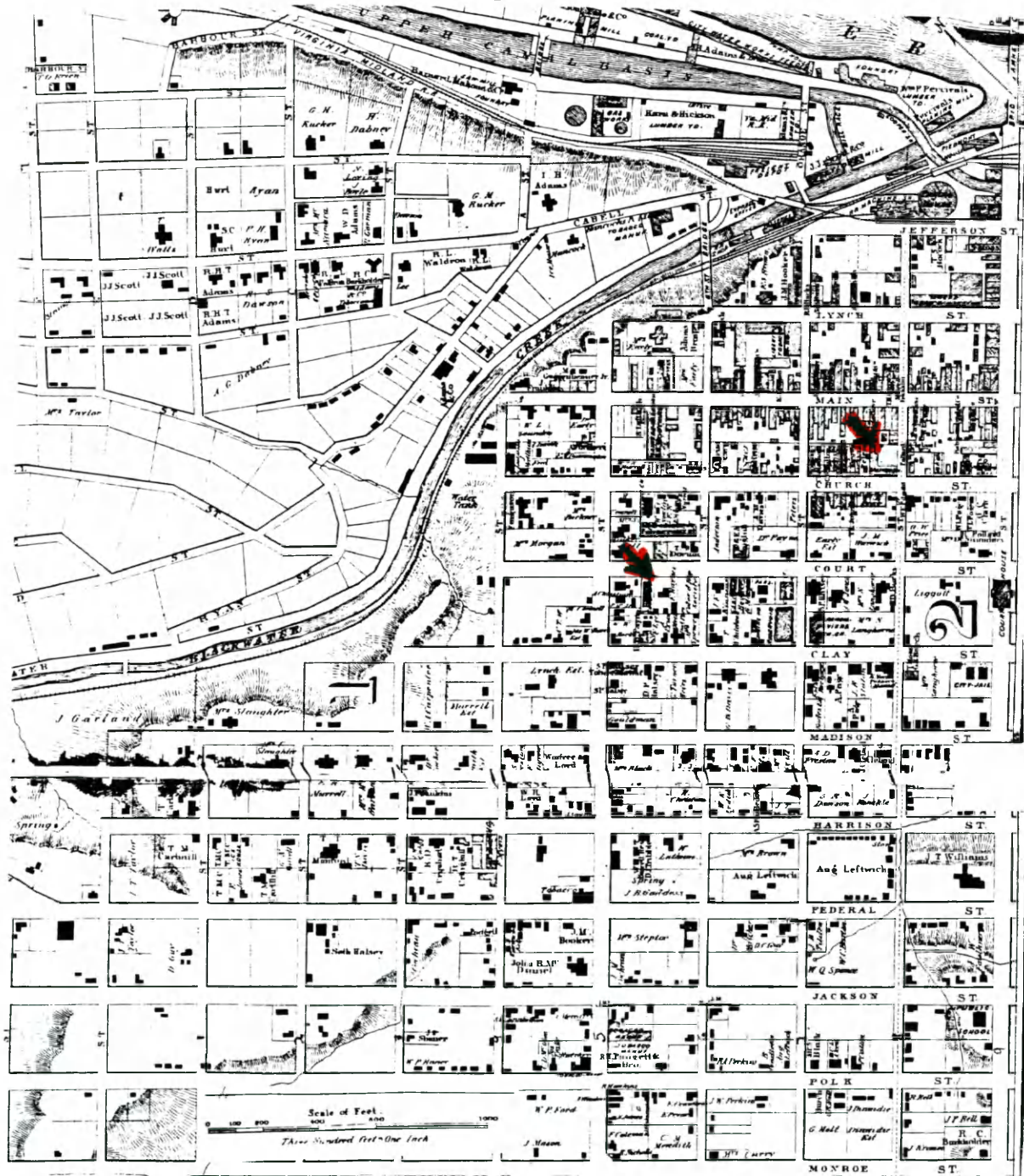
A map of Norfolk, traced from the George Nicholsan Map of 1802, with the locations of the racially-mixed First Baptist Church and its two African Baptist church offspring imposed (Courtesy: The Earl Gregg Swem Library, Special Collections)

Figure 3



Gray's New Map of Fredericksburg, 1878, showing the locations of the Shiloh African Baptist Church on Sophia Street and White Baptist Church on Princess Anne (Courtesy of Library of Virginia, 755.36)

Figure 4



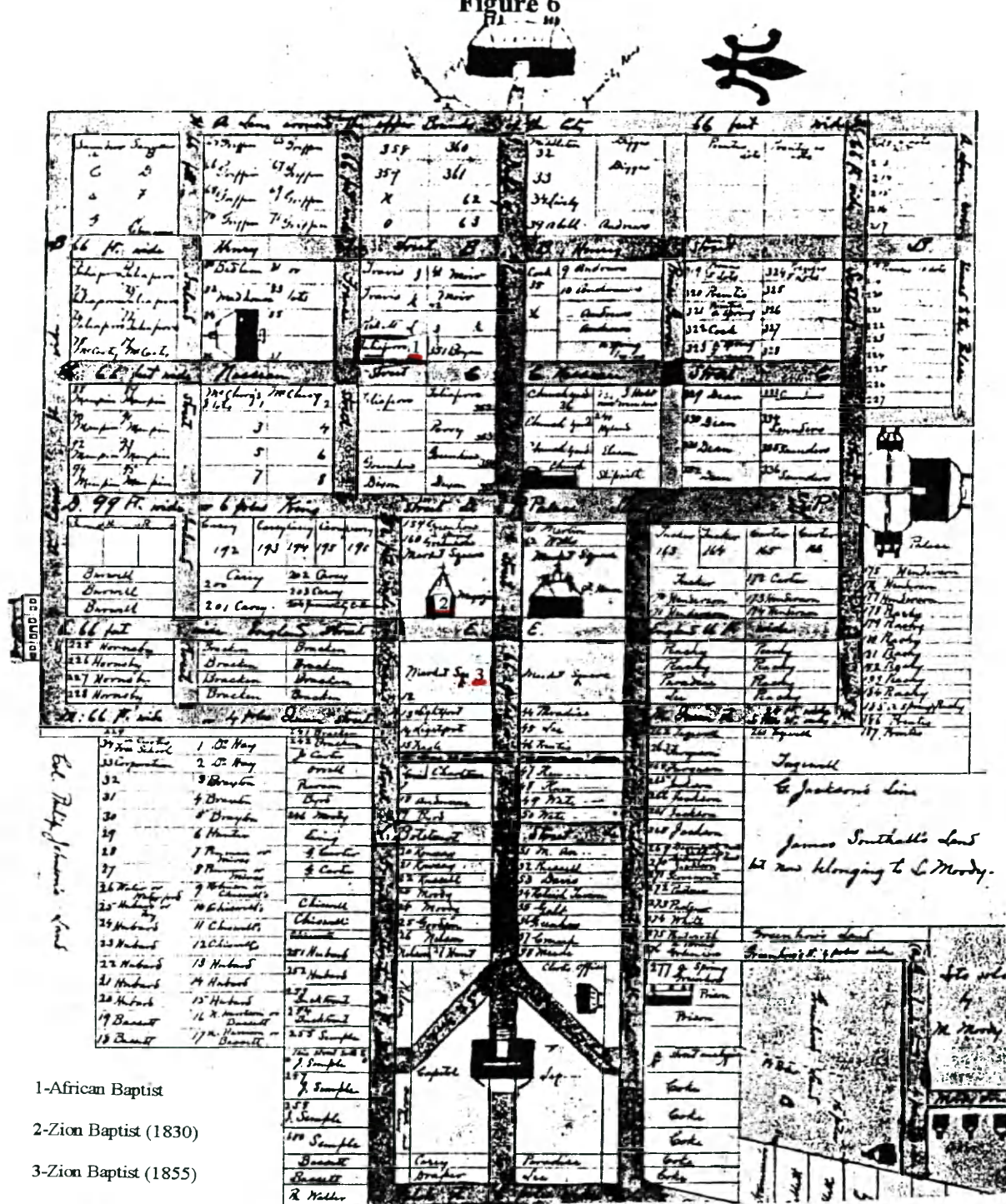
Gray's New Map of Lynchburg, 1877, depicting the locations of Court Street African Baptist Church and the White First Baptist Church on Church Street (Courtesy of Library of Virginia, 755.59)

Figure 5



A Map of Richmond, 1864, by A.D. Bache, indicating the locations of the First, Second and Third African Baptist, and the First and Second (White) Baptist Churches (Courtesy of Earl Gregg Swem Library)

Figure 6



The Unknown Draftsman's Map of Williamsburg, with later church locations imposed
(Courtesy of Earl Gregg Swem Library)

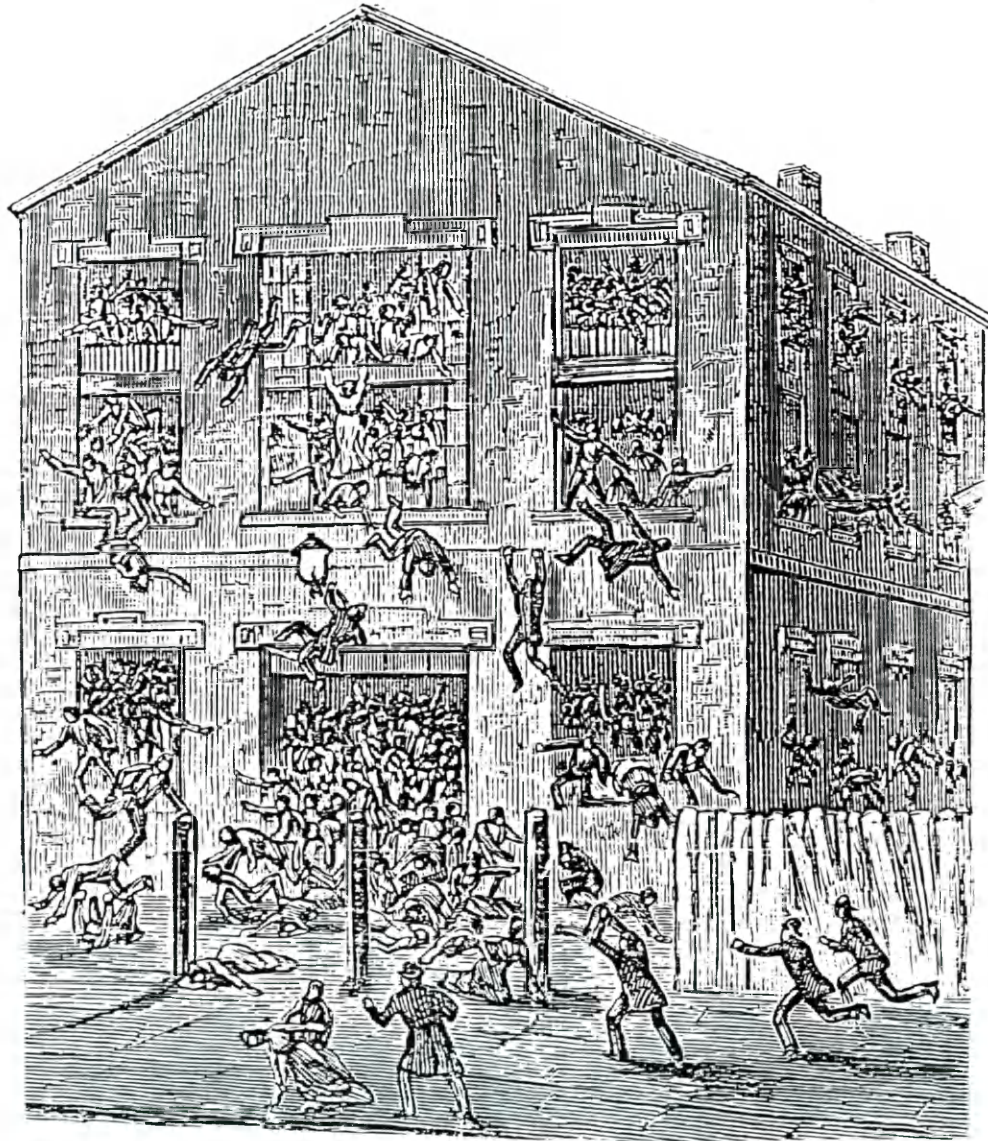
Figure 7



THE "OLD SALT BOX"

Norfolk's Bute Street Church, 1830-1877
(Courtesy of Virginia Department of Historic Resources, file 122-40)

Figure 8



VIRGINIA.—PANIC AND LOSS OF LIFE IN THE COURT STREET (COLORED) BAPTIST CHURCH, LYNCHBURG
OCTOBER 16TH.—FROM A SKETCH BY JOHN C. BROWNE.

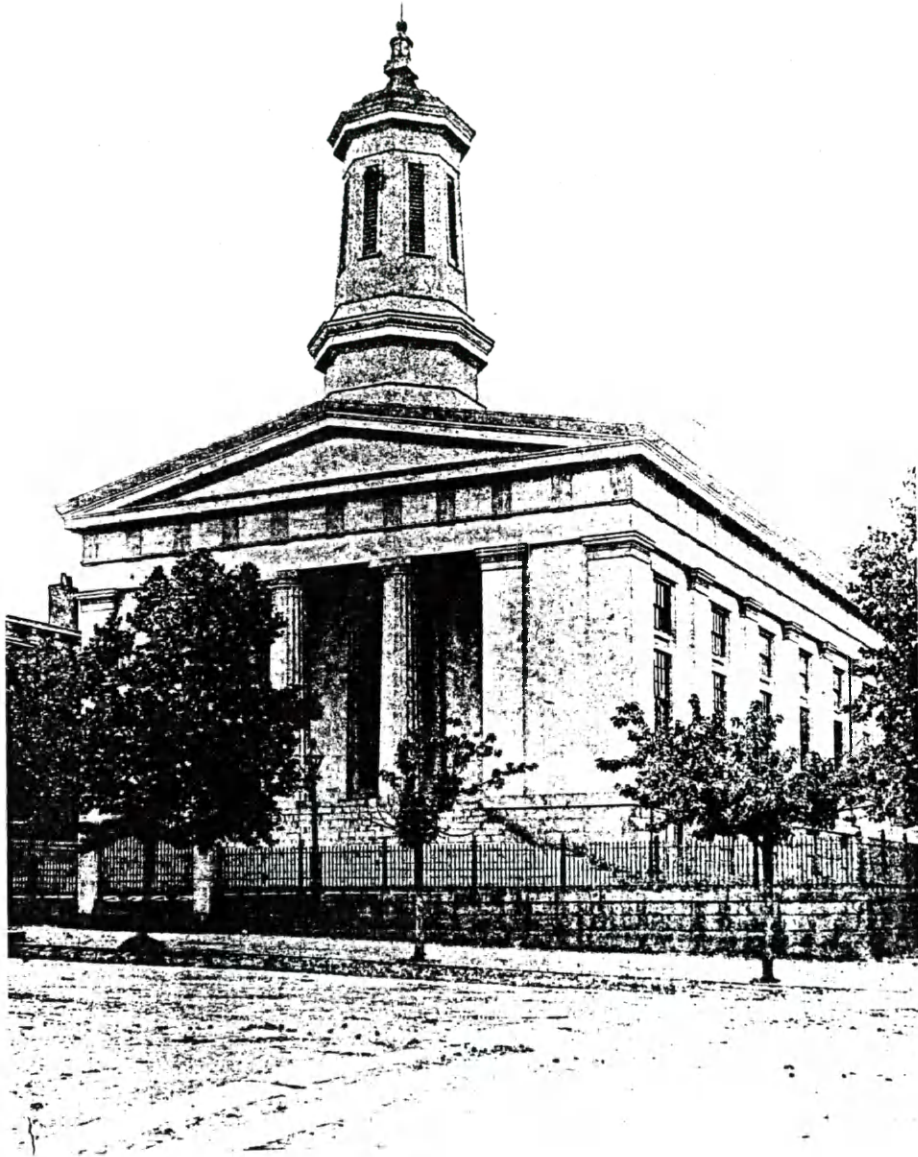
Lynchburg's Court Street Church, 1867-1878.
(Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, file 118-156)

Figure 9



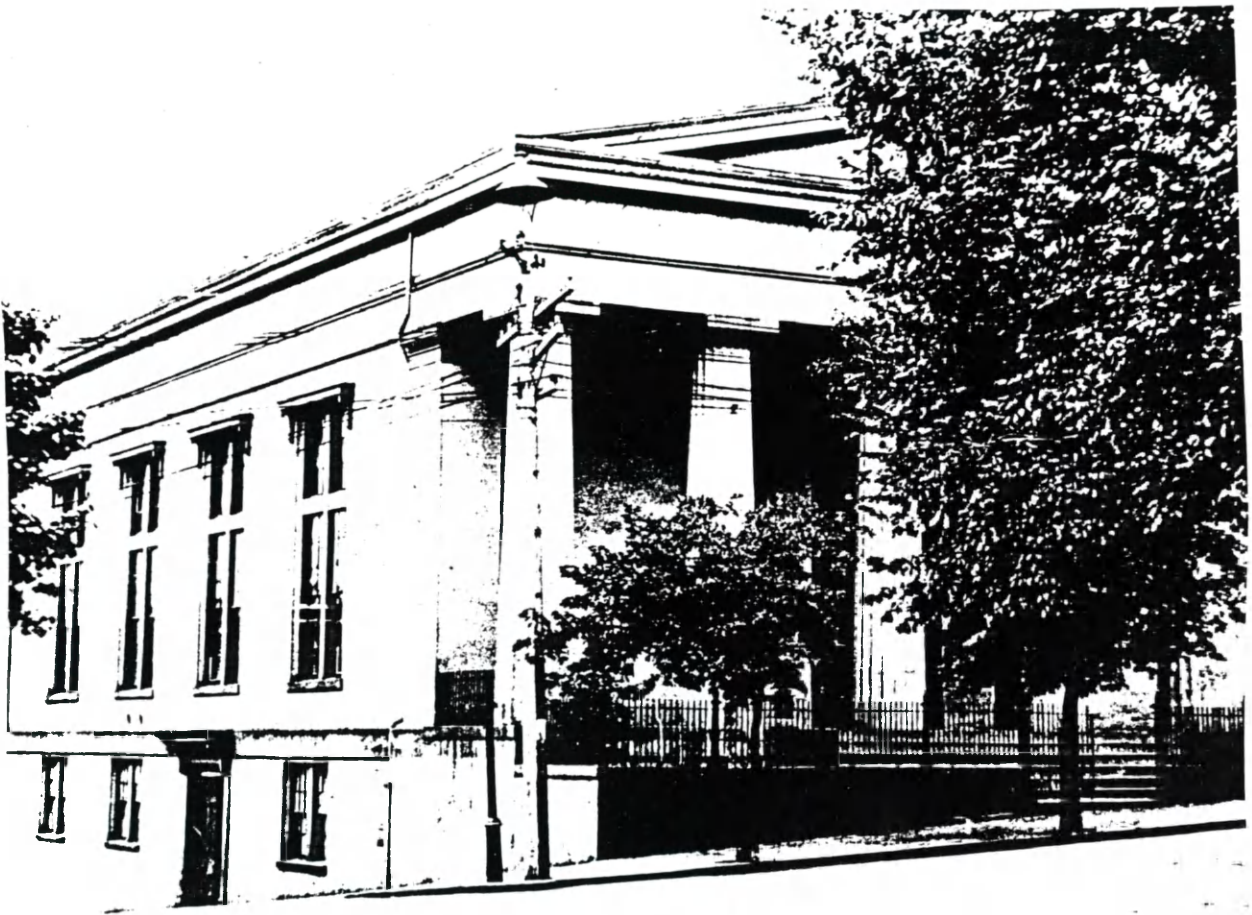
Norfolk's Bank Street Church, 1840-1886
(Photo available in Tucker 1972, and First Baptist Church of Norfolk 1950:6)

Figure 10



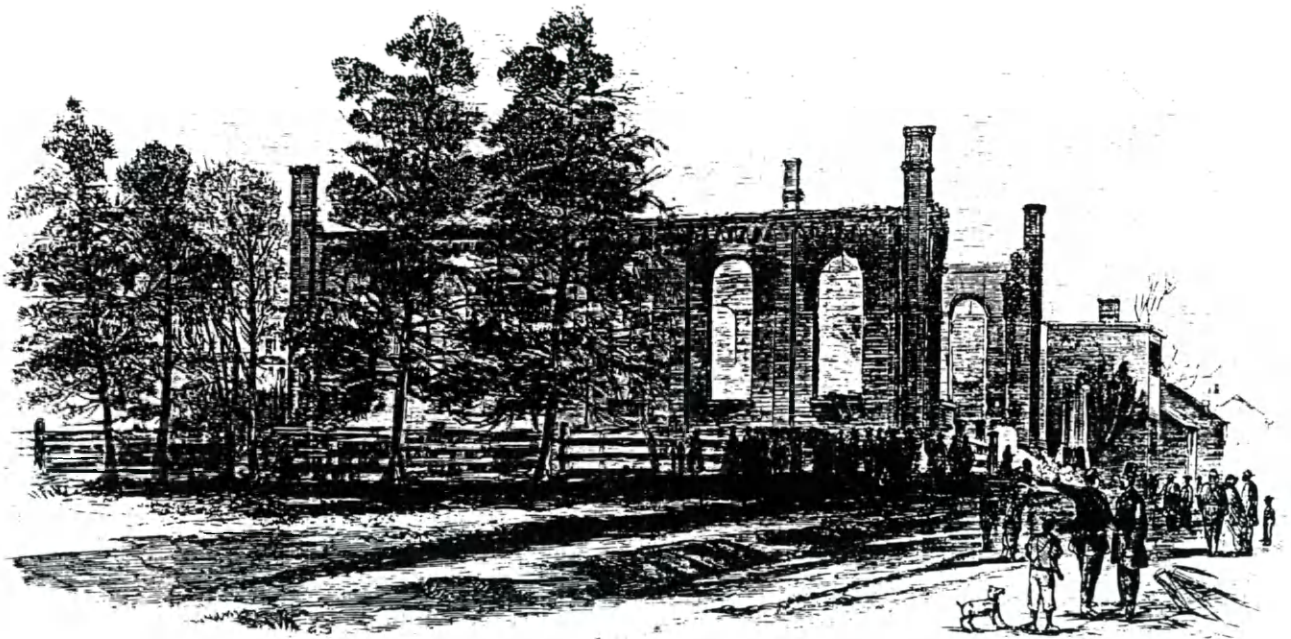
Richmond's First Baptist Church, 1841
(Courtesy of Library of Virginia, Neg. No. A9-2405 28993)

Figure 11



Richmond's Second Baptist Church (1840-1866) with steeple removed
(Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, file 127-451)

Figure 12



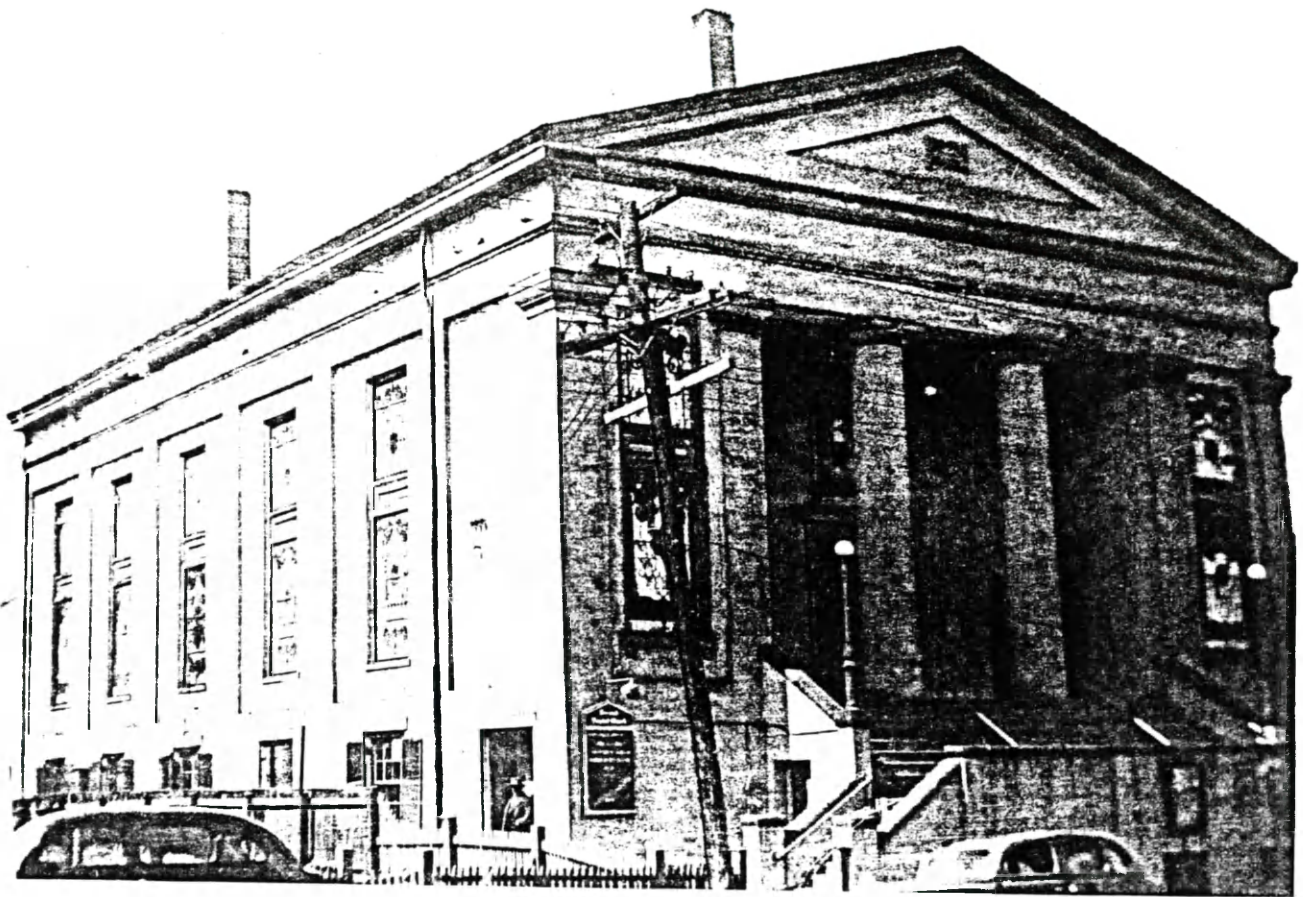
Ruins of the Harrison Street Church, Petersburg, after the fire of 1866.
(Courtesy of the Library of Virginia, Neg. A9-5691 36436)

Figure 13



Norfolk's Bank Street Church, 1866
(Courtesy of the Library of Virginia, Neg. No. 52552)

Figure 14



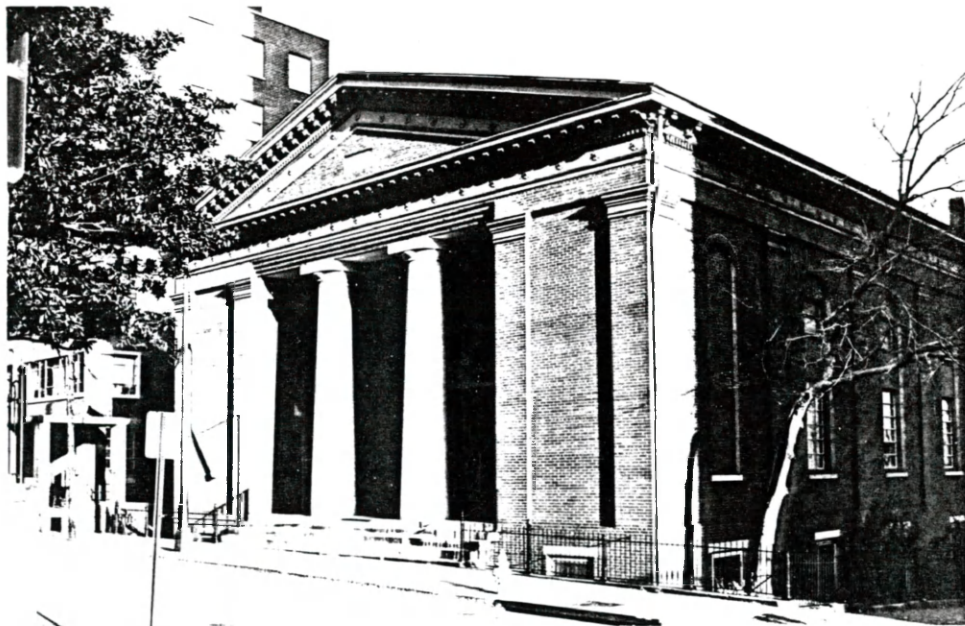
Richmond's Second African Baptist Church, 1866-1940
(Courtesy of the Library of Virginia, Neg. No. 39412)

Figure 15



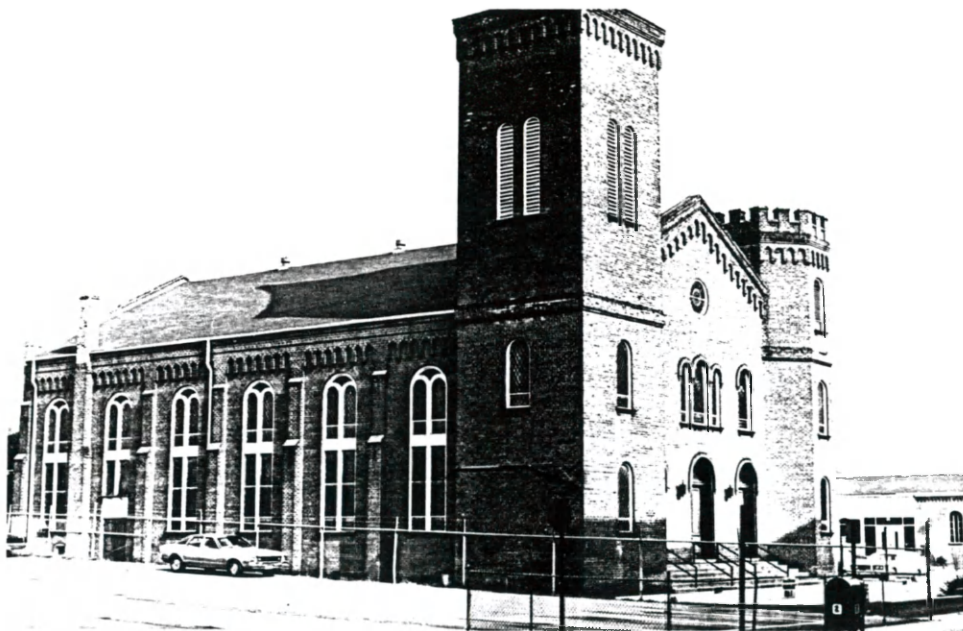
Richmond's Third African Baptist/Ebenezer Church, 1873
(Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Neg. No. 599)

Figure 16



Richmond's First African Baptist Church, 1876
Building was originally faced with stucco, but was remodeled in 1925.
(Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Neg. No. 7169)

Figure 17



Petersburg's Gillfield Baptist Church, 1879
(Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Neg. No. 3296-18A)

Figure 18



Alexandria's Alfred Street Church, 1880
(Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Neg. No. 5565)

Figure 19



Lynchburg's Court Street Church, 1880
(Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Neg. No. 5949-2)

Figure 20



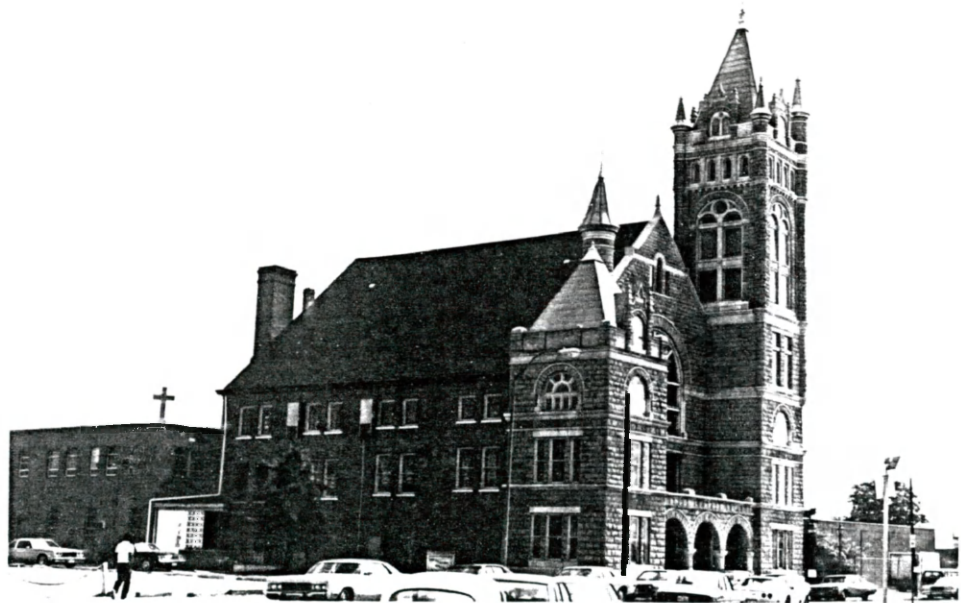
Norfolk's Freemason Street Church, 1850
(Courtesy the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Neg. No. 5812, 3571)

Figure 21



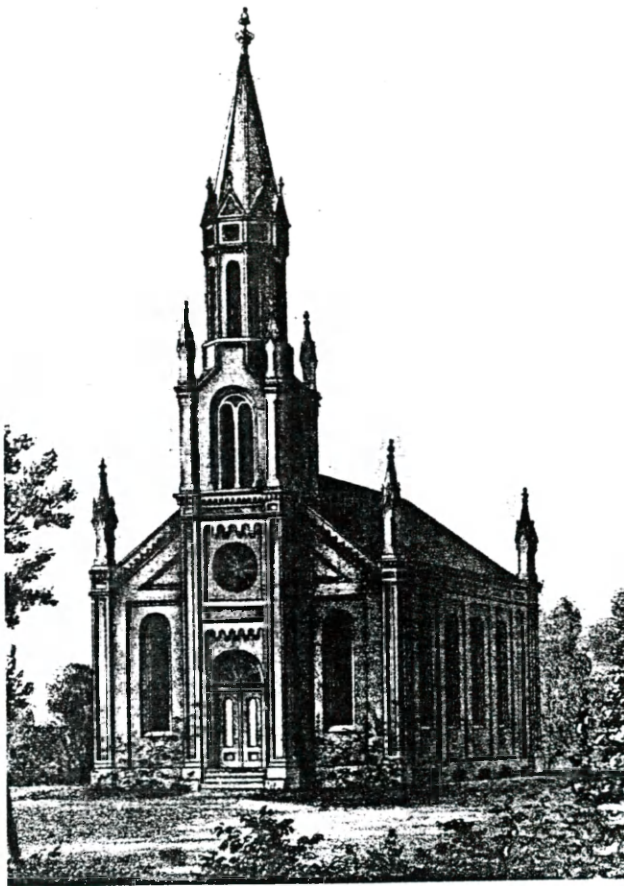
Fredericksburg's First Baptist Church, 1855
(Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Neg. No. 550)

Figure 22



Norfolk's Bute Street Church, 1906
(Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Neg. No. 6046-784)

Figure 23



Samuel Sloan's illustration of "A Village Church" in his work Model Architect (1852)

Figure 24



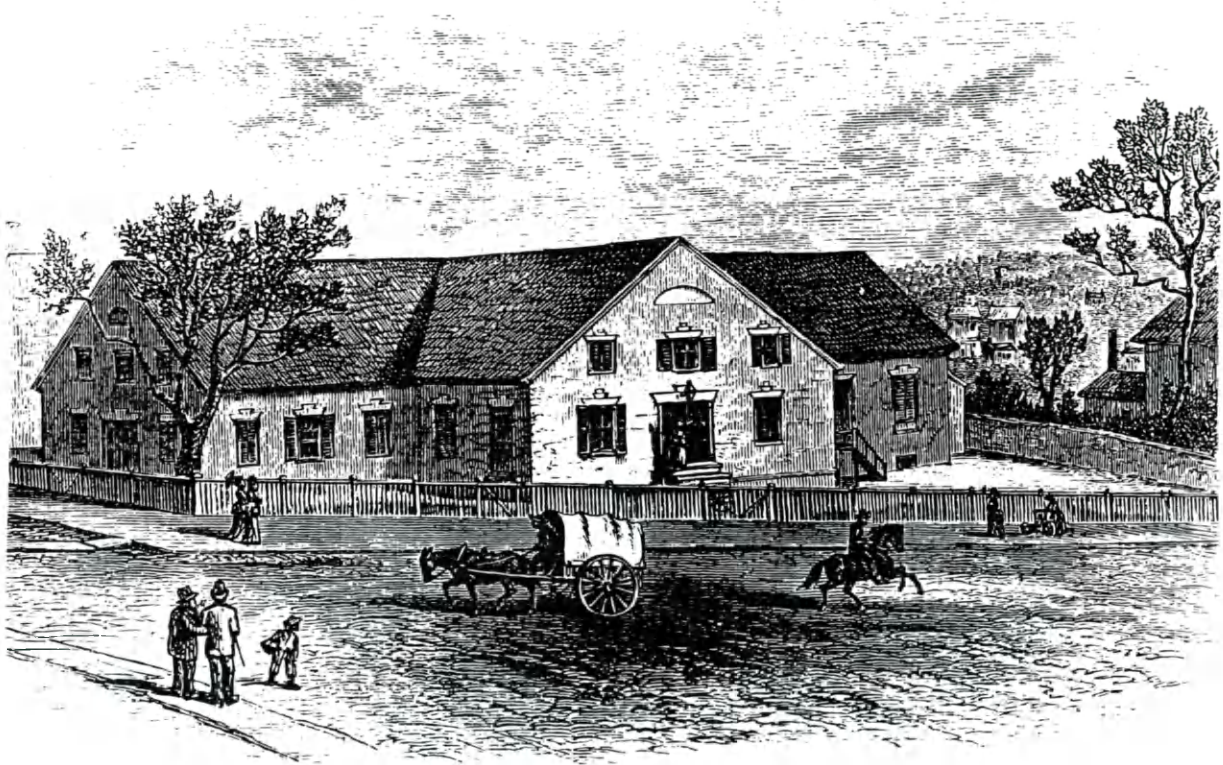
Norfolk's Bute Street Church, 1887-1904
(Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Neg. No. 7012-901,
Actual photograph of church available in First Baptist Church of Norfolk, 1950:6)

Figure 25



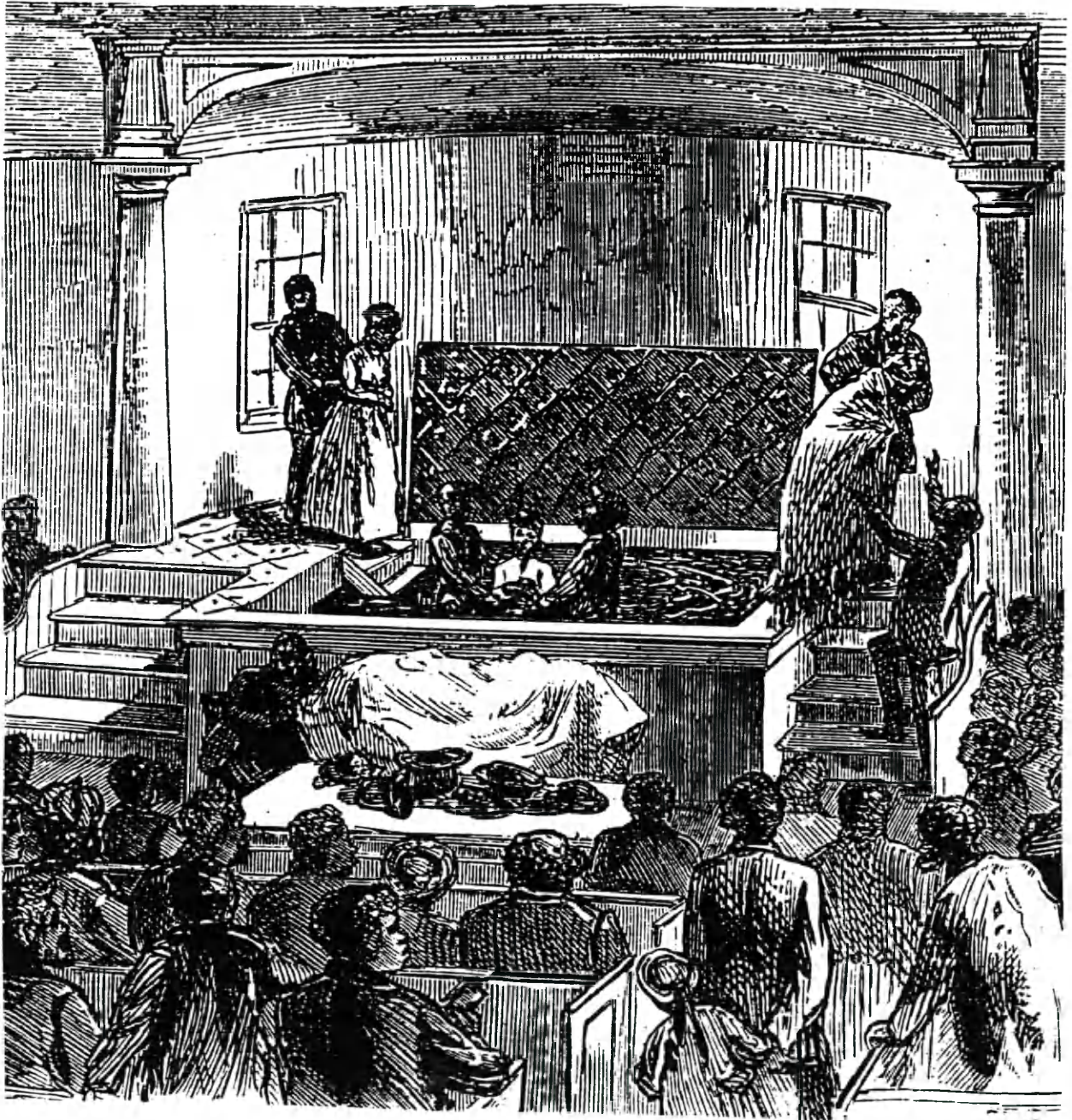
Williamsburg African Baptist Church, 1855, photo from 1900
(Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Block 14 #7, 77-432)

Figure 26



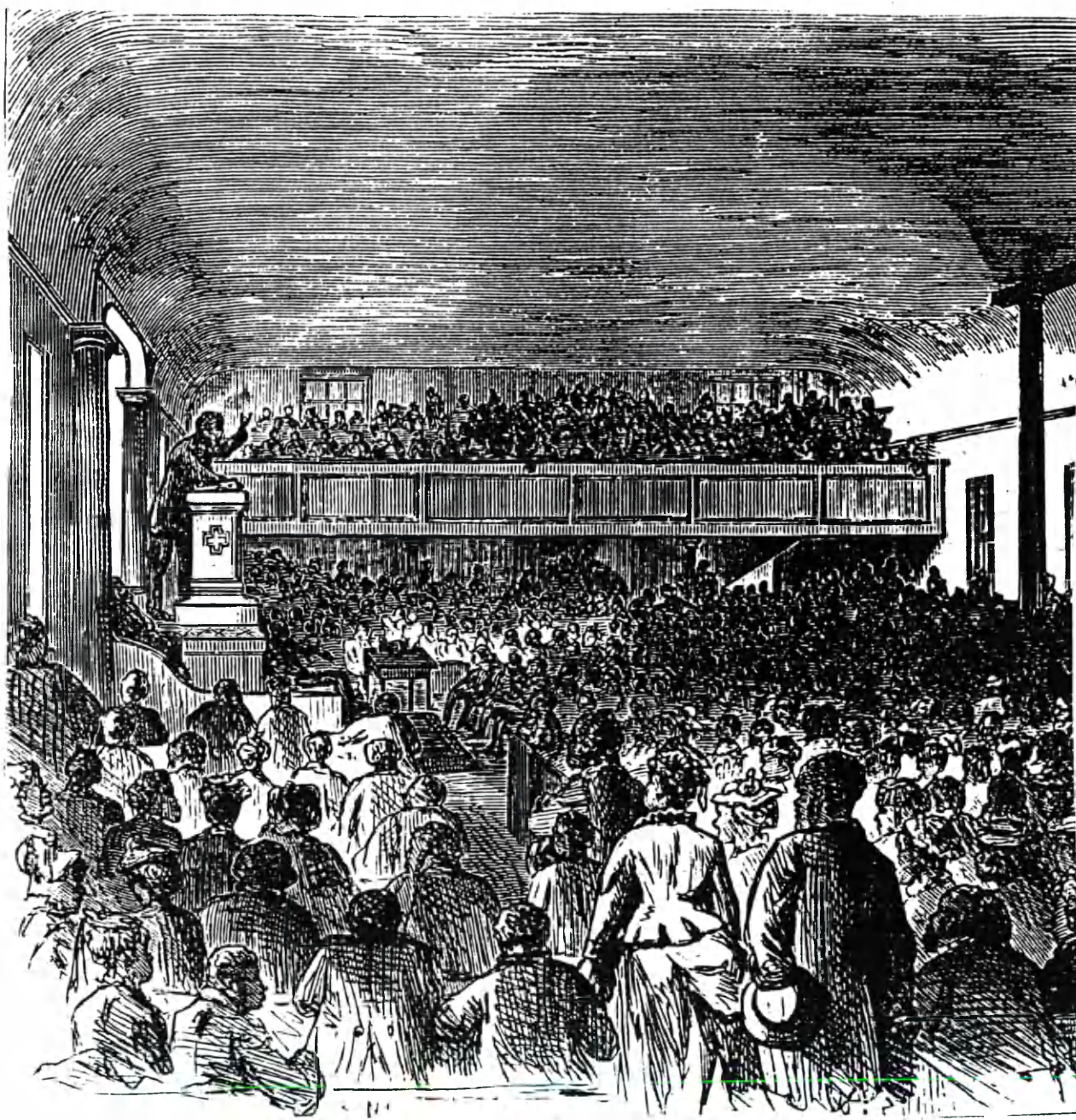
Richmond's First African Baptist Church, 1841-1876
(Courtesy of the Library of Virginia, Neg. No. A9-6500, 40052,
Actual photo also available from Library of Virginia, Neg. No. A9-4582)

Figure 27



The Baptistry of the First African Baptist Church, Richmond, drawn in 1874
(Courtesy of the Library of Virginia, Neg. No. A9-6502, 40051)

Figure 28



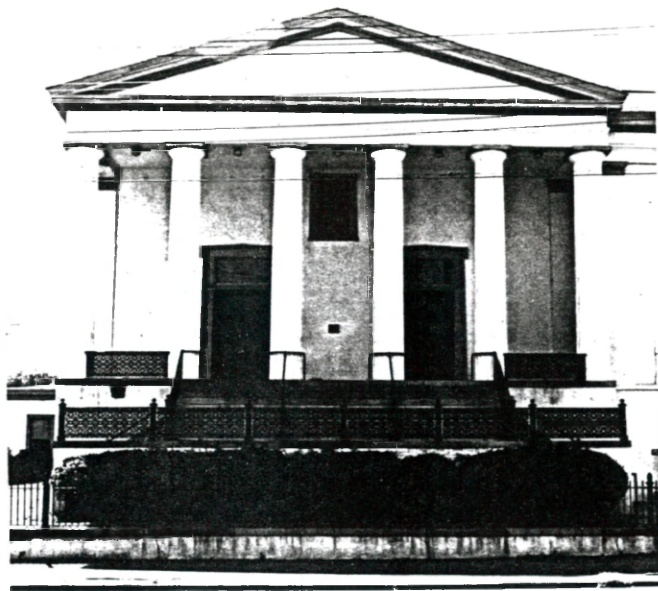
Interior of Richmond's First African Baptist Church, from the west wing, drawn in 1874.
(Courtesy of the Library of Virginia, Neg. No. A9-6503, 40050)

Figure 29



Williamsburg's Zion Baptist Church, 1855-1934
Powder Magazine, the meeting place of Zion Baptist in 1830-1854 shown on right
(Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Block 12 #16, 53-W-4253)

Figure 30



Richmond's Leigh Street Church, 1853
(Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Neg. No. 533)

Figure 31



**Fredericksburg's Shiloh Baptist Church, Old Site, 1887
(Sketch by author, based on photograph in Quinn 1908:272)**

Figure 32



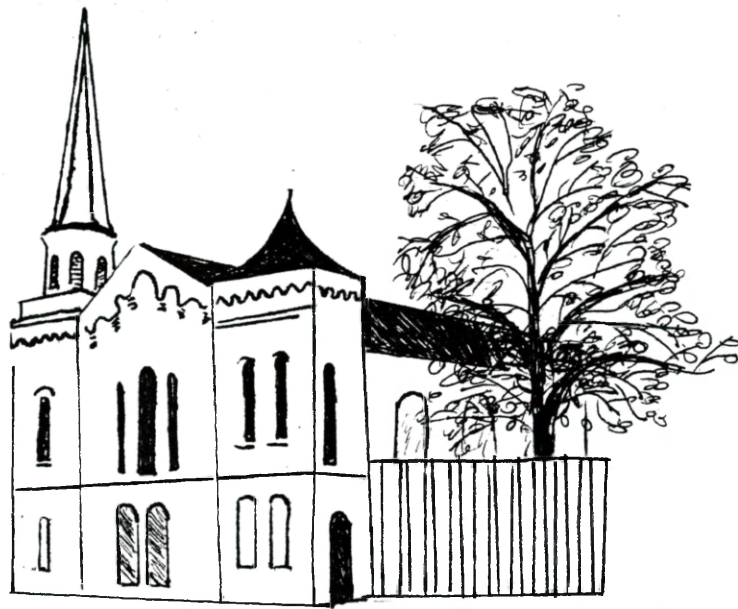
Fredericksburg's Shiloh Church, Old Site, Today
(Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Neg. No. 550)

Figure 33



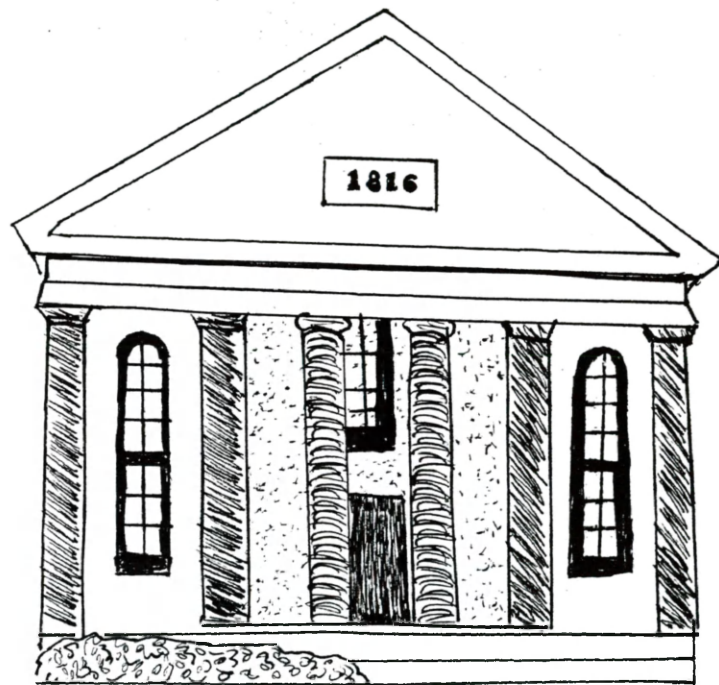
Elam Baptist Church, Charles City County, Today
(Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, file 18-62)

Figure 34



Alexandria First Baptist Church, 1805, rebuilt 1830 after fire.
(Drawing by author from extant building)

Figure 35



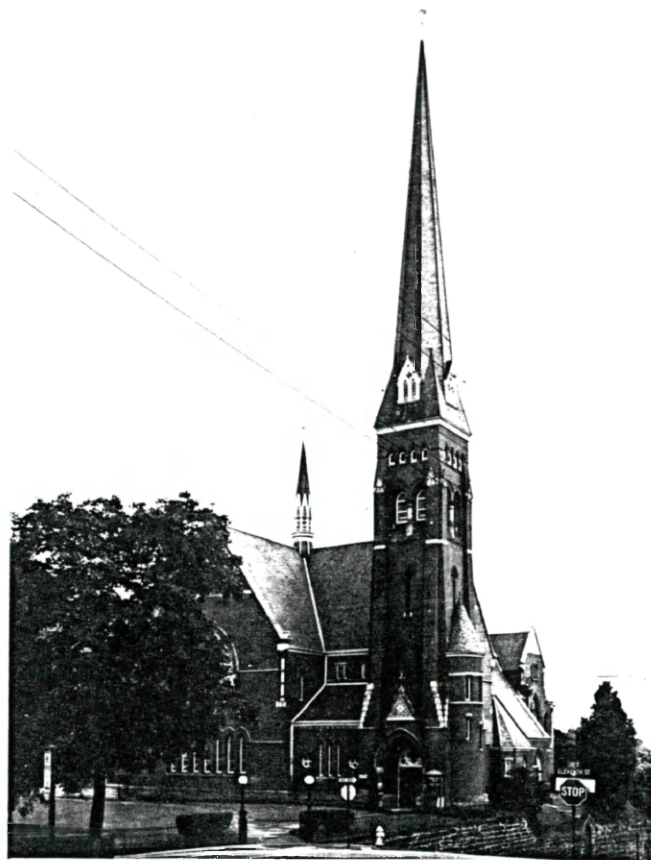
Norfolk's Cumberland Baptist Church, 1816
(Drawing by author, based on photograph in First Baptist Church of Norfolk, 1950:5)

Figure 36



Petersburg's Harrison Street Church, 1872, remodeled 1884
(Drawing by First Baptist Church of Petersburg, 1971,
See also Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Neg. Nos. 3368-22, 23)

Figure 37



Lynchburg's First Baptist Church, 1886
(Courtesy of Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Neg. No. 549-10,
See Allen 1981:116 for photo of 1850 Greek Revival appearance before remodeling)

Figure 38



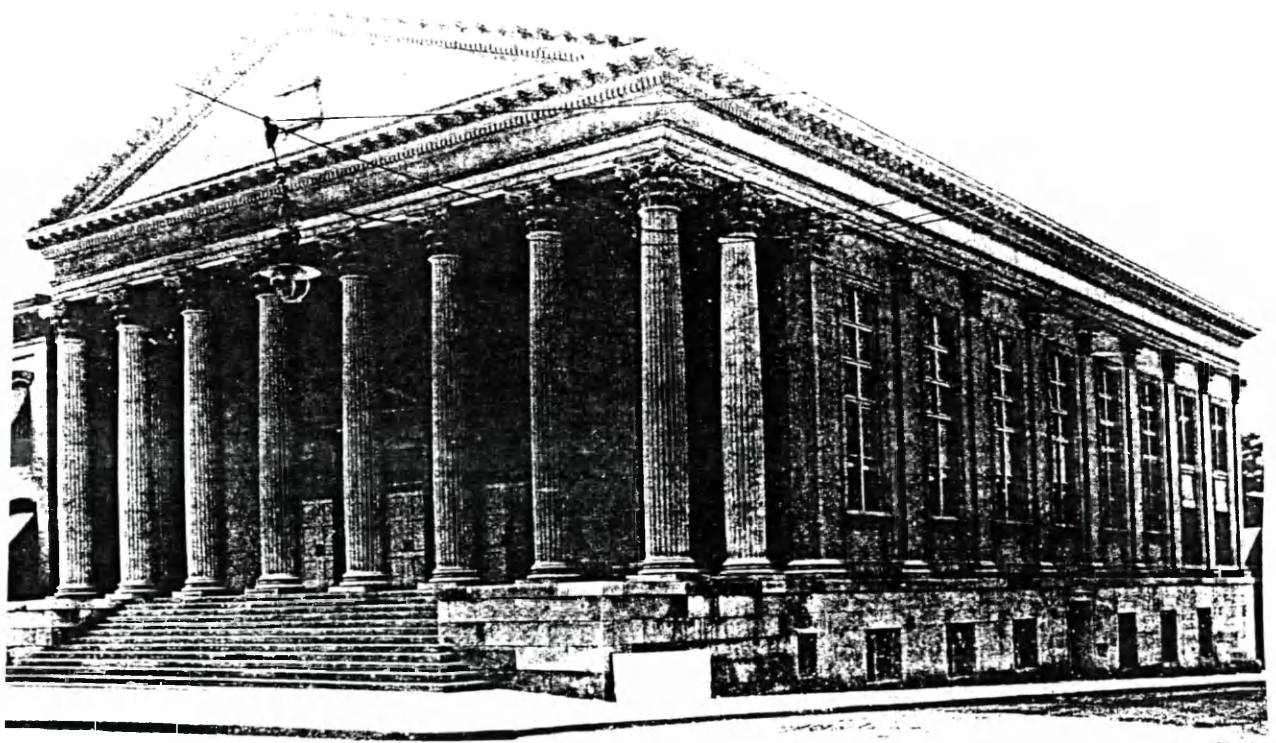
Richmond's Fourth Baptist Church, 1884
(Courtesy of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Neg. No. 4615)

Figure 39



Richmond's Grace Street Church, as it appeared in 1893
(Courtesy of the Library of Virginia, Neg. No. A9-2023 40884)

Figure 40



Richmond's Second (White) Baptist Church, 1906
(Courtesy of the Library of Virginia, Neg. No. A9-1060 25538)

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